

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

MISS HALCOMBE'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

JULY 4TH. I was so startled by the disturbance in Laura's face and manner, and so dismayed by the first waking impressions of my dream, that I was not fit to bear the revelation which burst upon me, when the name of Anne Catherick passed her lips. I could only stand rooted to the floor, looking at her in breathless silence.

She was too much absorbed by what had happened to notice the effect which her reply had produced on me. "I have seen Anne Catherick! I have spoken to Anne Catherick!" she repeated, as if I had not heard her. "Oh, Marian, I have such things to tell you! Come away—we may be interrupted here—come at once into my room!"

With those eager words, she caught me by the hand, and led me through the library, to the end room on the ground floor, which had been fitted up for her own especial use. No third person, except her maid, could have any excuse for surprising us here. She pushed me in before her, locked the door, and drew the chintz curtains that hung over the inside.

The strange, stunned feeling which had taken possession of me still remained. But a growing conviction that the complications which had long threatened to gather about her, and to gather about me, had suddenly closed fast round us both, was now beginning to penetrate my mind. I could not express it in words—I could hardly even realise it dimly in my own thoughts. "Anne Catherick!" I whispered to myself, with useless, helpless reiteration—"Anne Catherick!"

Laura drew me to the nearest seat, an ottoman in the middle of the room. "Look!" she said; "look here!"—and pointed to the bosom of her dress.

I saw, for the first time, that the lost brooch was pinned in its place again. There was something real in the sight of it, something real in the touching of it afterwards, which seemed to steady the whirl and confusion in my thoughts, and to help me to compose myself.

"Where did you find your brooch?" The first words I could say to her were the words which put that trivial question at that important moment.

"She found it, Marian."

"Where?"

"On the floor of the boat-house. Oh, how shall I begin—how shall I tell you about it? She talked to me so strangely—she looked so fearfully ill—she left me so suddenly——!"

Her voice rose as the tumult of her recollections pressed upon her mind. The inveterate distrust which weighs, night and day, on my spirits in this house, instantly roused me to warn her—just as the sight of the brooch had roused me to question her, the moment before.

"Speak low," I said. "The window is open, and the garden path runs beneath it. Begin at the beginning, Laura. Tell me, word for word, what passed between that woman and you."

"Shall I close the window first?"

"No; only speak low: only remember that Anne Catherick is a dangerous subject under your husband's roof. Where did you first see her?"

"At the boat-house, Marian. I went out, as you know, to find my brooch; and I walked along the path through the plantation, looking down on the ground carefully at every step. In that way I got on, after a long time, to the boat-house; and, as soon as I was inside it, I went on my knees to hunt over the floor. I was still searching, with my back to the doorway, when I heard a soft, strange voice, behind me, say, 'Miss Fairlie.'"

"Miss Fairlie!"

"Yes—my old name—the dear, familiar name that I thought I had parted from for ever. I started up—not frightened, the voice was too kind and gentle to frighten anybody—but very much surprised. There, looking at me from the doorway, stood a woman, whose face I never remembered to have seen before——"

"How was she dressed?"

"She had a neat, pretty white gown on, and over it a poor worn thin dark shawl. Her bonnet was of brown straw, as poor and worn as the shawl. I was struck by the difference between her gown and the rest of her dress, and she saw that I noticed it. 'Don't look at my bonnet and shawl,' she said, speaking in a quick, breathless, sudden way; 'if I mustn't wear white, I don't care what I wear. Look at my gown, as much as you please; I'm not ashamed of that.' Very strange, was it not? Before I could say anything to soothe her, she held out one of her hands, and I saw my brooch in it. I was so pleased and so grateful, that I went quite close

to her to say what I really felt. ‘Are you thankful enough to do me one little kindness?’ she asked. ‘Yes, indeed,’ I answered; ‘any kindness in my power I shall be glad to show you.’ ‘Then let me pin your brooch on for you, now I have found it.’ Her request was so unexpected, Marian, and she made it with such extraordinary eagerness, that I drew back a step or two, not well knowing what to do. ‘Ah!’ she said, ‘your mother would have let me pin on the brooch.’ There was something in her voice and her look, as well as in her mentioning my mother in that reproachful manner, which made me ashamed of my distrust. I took her hand with the brooch in it, and put it up gently on the bosom of my dress. ‘You knew my mother?’ I said. ‘Was it very long ago? have I ever seen you before?’ Her hands were busy fastening the brooch: she stopped and pressed them against my breast. ‘You don’t remember a fine spring day at Limmeridge,’ she said, ‘and your mother walking down the path that led to the school, with a little girl on each side of her? I have had nothing else to think of since; and I remember it. You were one of the little girls, and I was the other. Pretty, clever Miss Fairlie, and poor dazed Anne Catherick were nearer to each other, then, than they are now!—’

‘Did you remember her, Laura, when she told you her name?’

‘Yes—I remembered your asking me about Anne Catherick at Limmeridge, and your saying that she had once been considered like me.’

‘What reminded you of that, Laura?’

‘She reminded me. While I was looking at her, while she was very close to me, it came over my mind suddenly that we were like each other! Her face was pale and thin and weary—but the sight of it startled me, as if it had been the sight of my own face in the glass after a long illness. The discovery—I don’t know why—gave me such a shock, that I was perfectly incapable of speaking to her, for the moment.’

‘Did she seem hurt by your silence?’

‘I am afraid she was hurt by it. ‘You have not got your mother’s face,’ she said, ‘or your mother’s heart. Your mother’s face was dark; and your mother’s heart, Miss Fairlie, was the heart of an angel.’ ‘I am sure I feel kindly towards you,’ I said, ‘though I may not be able to express it as I ought. Why do you call me Miss Fairlie—?’ ‘Because I love the name of Fairlie and hate the name of Glyde,’ she broke out, violently. I had seen nothing like madness in her before this; but I fancied I saw it now in her eyes. ‘I only thought you might not know I was married,’ I said, remembering the wild letter she wrote to me at Limmeridge, and trying to quiet her. She sighed bitterly, and turned away from me. ‘Not know you were married!’ she repeated. ‘I am here because you are married. I am here to make atonement to you, before I meet your mother in the world beyond the grave.’ She drew farther and farther away

from me, till she was out of the boat-house—and, then, she watched and listened for a little while. When she turned round to speak again, instead of coming back, she stopped where she was, looking in at me, with a hand on each side of the entrance. ‘Did you see me at the lake last night?’ she said. ‘Did you hear me following you in the wood? I have been waiting for days together to speak to you alone—I have left the only friend I have in the world, anxious and frightened about me—I have risked being shut up again in the madhouse—and all for your sake, Miss Fairlie, all for your sake.’ Her words alarmed me, Marian; and yet, there was something in the way she spoke, that made me pity her with all my heart. I am sure my pity must have been sincere, for it made me bold enough to ask the poor creature to come in, and sit down in the boat-house, by my side.”

“Did she do so?”

“No. She shook her head, and told me she must stop where she was, to watch and listen, and see that no third person surprised us. And from first to last, there she waited at the entrance, with a hand on each side of it; sometimes bending in suddenly to speak to me; sometimes drawing back suddenly to look about her. ‘I was here yesterday,’ she said, ‘before it came dark; and I heard you, and the lady with you, talking together. I heard you tell her about your husband. I heard you say you had no influence to make him believe you, and no influence to keep him silent. Ah! I knew what those words meant; my conscience told me while I was listening. Why did I ever let you marry him! Oh, my fear—my mad, miserable, wicked fear!—’ She covered up her face in her poor worn shawl, and moaned and murmured to herself behind it. I began to be afraid she might break out into some terrible despair which neither she nor I could master. ‘Try to quiet yourself,’ I said; ‘try to tell me how you might have prevented my marriage.’ She took the shawl from her face, and looked at me vacantly. ‘I ought to have had heart enough to stop at Limmeridge,’ she answered. ‘I ought never to have let the news of his coming there frighten me away. I ought to have warned you and saved you before it was too late. Why did I only have courage enough to write you that letter? Why did I only do harm, when I wanted and meant to do good? Oh, my fear—my mad, miserable, wicked fear!’ She repeated those words again, and hid her face again in the end of her poor worn shawl. It was dreadful to see her, and dreadful to hear her.”

“Surely, Laura, you asked what the fear was which she dwelt on so earnestly?”

“Yes; I asked that.”

“And what did she say?”

“She asked me, in return, if I should not be afraid of a man who had shut me up in a madhouse, and who would shut me up again, if he could? I said, ‘Are you afraid still? Surely you would not be here, if you were afraid now?’

"No," she said, "I am not afraid now." I asked why not. She suddenly bent forward into the boat-house, and said, "Can't you guess why?" I shook my head. "Look at me," she went on. I told her I was grieved to see that she looked very sorrowful and very ill. She smiled, for the first time. "Ill?" she repeated; "I'm dying. You know why I'm not afraid of him now. Do you think I shall meet your mother in heaven? Will she forgive me, if I do?" I was so shocked and so startled, that I could make no reply. "I have been thinking of it," she went on, "all the time I have been in hiding from your husband, all the time I lay ill. My thoughts have driven me here—I want to make atonement—I want to undo all I can of the harm I once did." I begged her as earnestly as I could to tell me what she meant. She still looked at me with fixed, vacant eyes. "Shall I undo the harm?" she said to herself, doubtfully. "You have friends to take your part. If you know his wicked secret, he will be afraid of you; he won't dare use you as he used me. He must treat you mercifully for his own sake, if he is afraid of you and your friends. And if he treats you mercifully, and if I can say it was my doing—" I listened eagerly for more; but she stopped at those words.

"You tried to make her go on?"

"I tried; but she only drew herself away from me again, and leaned her face and arms against the side of the boat-house. 'Oh!' I heard her say, with a dreadful, distracted tenderness in her voice, 'oh! if I could only be buried with your mother! If I could only wake at her side, when the angel's trumpet sounds, and the graves give up their dead at the resurrection!'—Marian! I trembled from head to foot—it was horrible to hear her. 'But there is no hope of that,' she said, moving a little, so as to look at me again; 'no hope for a poor stranger like me. I shall not rest under the marble cross that I washed with my own hands, and made so white and pure for her sake. Oh no! oh no! God's mercy, not man's, will take me to her, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.' She spoke those words quietly and sorrowfully, with a heavy, hopeless sigh; and then waited a little. Her face was confused and troubled; she seemed to be thinking, or trying to think. 'What was it I said just now?' she asked, after a while. 'When your mother is in my mind, everything else goes out of it. What was I saying? what was I saying?' I reminded the poor creature, as kindly and delicately as I could. 'Ah, yes, yes,' she said, still in a vacant, perplexed manner. 'You are helpless with your wicked husband. Yes. And I must do what I have come to do here—I must make it up to you for having been afraid to speak out at a better time.' 'What is it you have to tell me?' I asked. 'A Secret,' she answered. 'The Secret that your cruel husband is afraid of.' Her face darkened; and a hard, angry stare fixed itself in her eyes. She began waving her hand at me in a strange, unmeaning manner.

"My mother knows the Secret," she said, speaking slowly for the first time; weighing every word as she uttered it. "My mother has wasted and worn away under the Secret half her lifetime. One day, when I was grown up, she told it to me. And your husband knew she told it. Knew, to my cost. Ah, poor me! knew, knew, knew she told it."

"Yes! yes! What did she say next?"

"She stopped again, Marian, at that point—"

"And said no more?"

"And listened eagerly. 'Hush!' she whispered, still waving her hand at me. 'Hush!' She moved aside out of the doorway, moved slowly and stealthily, step by step, till I lost her past the edge of the boat-house."

"Surely, you followed her?"

"Yes; my anxiety made me bold enough to rise and follow her. Just as I reached the entrance, she appeared again, suddenly, round the side of the boat-house. 'The secret,' I whispered to her—'wait and tell me the secret!' She caught hold of my arm, and looked at me, with wild, frightened eyes. 'Not now,' she said; 'we are not alone—we are watched. Come here to-morrow, at this time—by yourself—mind—by yourself.' She pushed me roughly into the boat-house again; and I saw her no more."

"Oh, Laura, Laura, another chance lost! If I had only been near you, she should not have escaped us. On which side did you lose sight of her?"

"On the left side, where the ground sinks and the wood is thickest."

"Did you run out again? did you call after her?"

"How could I? I was too terrified to move or speak."

"But when you *did* move—when you came out—?"

"I ran back here, to tell you what had happened."

"Did you see any one, or hear any one in the plantation?"

"No—it seemed to be all still and quiet, when I passed through it."

I waited for a moment, to consider. Was this third person, supposed to have been secretly present at the interview, a reality, or the creature of Anne Catherick's excited fancy? It was impossible to determine. The one thing certain was, that we had failed again on the very brink of discovery—failed utterly and irretrievably, unless Anne Catherick kept her appointment at the boat-house, for the next day.

"Are you quite sure you have told me everything that passed. Every word that was said?" I inquired.

"I think so," she answered. "My powers of memory, Marian, are not like yours. But I was so strongly impressed, so deeply interested, that nothing of any importance can possibly have escaped me."

"My dear Laura, the merest trifles are of importance where Anne Catherick is concerned. Think again. Did no chance reference escape

her as to the place in which she is living at the present time?"

"None that I can remember."

"Did she not mention a companion and friend—a woman named Mrs. Clements?"

"Oh, yes! yes! I forgot that. She told me Mrs. Clements wanted sadly to go with her to the lake, and take care of her, and begged and prayed that she would not venture into this neighbourhood alone."

"Was that all she said about Mrs. Clements?"

"Yes, that was all."

"She told you nothing about the place in which she took refuge after leaving Todd's Corner?"

"Nothing—I am quite sure."

"Nor where she has lived since? Nor what her illness had been?"

"No, Marian; not a word. Tell me, pray tell me, what you think about it. I don't know what to think, or what to do next."

"You must do this, my love: You must carefully keep the appointment at the boathouse, to-morrow. It is impossible to say what interests may not depend on your seeing that woman again. You shall not be left to yourself a second time. I will follow you, at a safe distance. Nobody shall see me; but I will keep within hearing of your voice, if anything happens. Anne Catherick has escaped Walter Hartright, and has escaped *you*. Whatever happens, she shall not escape *me*."

Laura's eyes read mine attentively while I was speaking.

"You believe," she said, "in this secret that my husband is afraid of?"

"I do believe in it."

"Anne Catherick's manner, Marian, was wild, her eyes were wandering and vacant, when she said those words. Would you trust her in other things?"

"I trust nothing, Laura, but my own observation of your husband's conduct. I judge Anne Catherick's words by his actions—and I believe there *is* a secret."

I said no more, and got up to leave the room. Thoughts were troubling me, which I might have told her if we had spoken together longer, and which it might have been dangerous for her to know. The influence of the terrible dream from which she had awakened me, hung darkly and heavily over every fresh impression which the progress of her narrative produced on my mind. I felt the ominous Future, coming close; chilling me, with an unutterable awe; forcing on me the conviction of an unseen Design in the long series of complications which had now fastened round us. I thought of Hartright—as I saw him, in the body, when he said farewell; as I saw him, in the spirit, in my dream—and I, too, began to doubt now whether we were not advancing, blindfold, to an appointed and an inevitable End.

Leaving Laura to go up-stairs alone, I went out to look about me in the walks near the

house. The circumstances under which Anne Catherick had parted from her, had made me secretly anxious to know how Count Fosco was passing the afternoon; and had rendered me secretly distrustful of the results of that solitary journey from which Sir Percival had returned but a few hours since.

After looking for them in every direction, and discovering nothing, I returned to the house, and entered the different rooms on the ground floor, one after another. They were all empty. I came out again into the hall, and went up-stairs to return to Laura. Madame Fosco opened her door, as I passed it in my way along the passage; and I stopped to see if she could inform me of the whereabouts of her husband and Sir Percival. Yes; she had seen them both from her window more than an hour since. The Count had looked up, with his customary kindness, and had mentioned, with his habitual attention to her in the smallest trifles, that he and his friend were going out together for a long walk.

For a long walk! They had never yet been in each other's company with that object in my experience of them. Sir Percival cared for no exercise but riding; and the Count (except when he was polite enough to be my escort) cared for no exercise at all.

When I joined Laura again, I found that she had called to mind, in my absence, the impending question of the signature to the deed, which, in the interest of discussing her interview with Anne Catherick, we had hitherto overlooked. Her first words when I saw her, expressed her surprise at the absence of the expected summons to attend Sir Percival in the library.

"You may make your mind easy on that subject," I said. "For the present, at least, neither your resolution nor mine will be exposed to any further trial. Sir Percival has altered his plans: the business of the signature is put off."

"Put off?" Laura repeated, amazedly. "Who told you so?"

"My authority is Count Fosco. I believe it is to his interference that we are indebted for your husband's sudden change of purpose."

"It seems impossible, Marian. If the object of my signing was, as we suppose, to obtain money for Sir Percival that he urgently wanted, how can the matter be put off?"

"I think, Laura, we have the means at hand of settling that doubt at rest. Have you forgotten the conversation that I heard between Sir Percival and the lawyer, as they were crossing the hall?"

"No; but I don't remember—"

"I do. There were two alternatives proposed. One, was to obtain your signature to the parchment. The other, was to gain time by giving bills at three months. The last resource is evidently the resource now adopted—and we may fairly hope to be relieved from our share in Sir Percival's embarrassments for some time to come."

"Oh, Marian, it sounds too good to be true!"

"Does it, my love? You complimented me

on my ready memory not long since—but you seem to doubt it now. I will get my journal, and you shall see if I am right or wrong."

I went away and got the book at once. On looking back to the entry referring to the lawyer's visit, we found that my recollection of the two alternatives presented was accurately correct. It was almost as great a relief to my mind as to Laura's, to find that my memory had served me, on this occasion, as faithfully as usual. In the perilous uncertainty of our present situation, it is hard to say what future interests may not depend upon the regularity of the entries in my journal, and upon the reliability of my recollection at the time when I make them.

Laura's face and manner suggested to me that this last consideration had occurred to her as well as to myself. Any way, it is only a trifling matter; and I am almost ashamed to put it down here in writing—it seems to set the forlornness of our situation in such a miserably vivid light. We must have little indeed to depend on, when the discovery that my memory can still be trusted to serve us, is hailed as if it was the discovery of a new friend!

The first bell for dinner separated us. Just as it had done ringing, Sir Percival and the Count returned from their walk. We heard the master of the house storming at the servant for being five minutes late; and the master's guest interposing, as usual, in the interests of propriety, patience, and peace.

* * * * *

The evening has come and gone. No extraordinary event has happened. But I have noticed certain peculiarities in the conduct of Sir Percival and the Count, which have sent me to my bed, feeling very anxious and uneasy about Anne Catherick, and about the results which to-morrow may produce.

I know enough by this time, to be sure that the aspect of Sir Percival which is the most false, and which, therefore, means the worst, is his polite aspect. That long walk with his friend had ended in improving his manners, especially towards his wife. To Laura's secret surprise and to my secret alarm, he called her by her Christian name, asked if she had heard lately from her uncle, inquired when Mrs. Vesey was to receive her invitation to Blackwater, and showed her so many other little attentions, that he almost recalled the days of his hateful courtship at Limmeridge House. This was a bad sign, to begin with; and I thought it more ominous still, that he should pretend, after dinner, to fall asleep in the drawing-room, and that his eyes should cunningly follow Laura and me, when he thought we neither of us suspected him. I have never had any doubt that his sudden journey by himself took him to Wellingham to question Mrs. Catherick—but the experience of to-night has made me fear that the expedition was not undertaken in vain, and that he has got the information which he unquestionably left us to collect. If I knew where

Anne Catherick was to be found, I would be up to-morrow with sunrise, and warn her.

While the aspect under which Sir Percival presented himself, to-night, was unhappily but too familiar to me, the aspect under which the Count appeared was, on the other hand, entirely new in my experience of him. He permitted me, this evening, to make his acquaintance, for the first time, in the character of a Man of Sentiment—of sentiment, as I believe, really felt, not assumed for the occasion.

For instance, he was quiet and subdued; his eyes and his voice expressed a restrained sensibility. He wore (as if there was some hidden connexion between his showiest finery and his deepest feeling) the most magnificent waistcoat he had yet appeared in—it was made of pale sea-green silk, and delicately trimmed with fine silver braid. His voice sank into the tenderest inflections, his smile expressed a thoughtful, fatherly admiration, whenever he spoke to Laura or to me. He pressed his wife's hand under the table, when she thanked him for trifling little attentions at dinner. He took wine with her. "Your health and happiness, my angel!" he said, with fond, glistening eyes. He eat little or nothing; and sighed, and said "Good Percival!" when his friend laughed at him. After dinner, he took Laura by the hand, and asked her if she would be "so sweet as to play to him." She complied, through sheer astonishment. He sat by the piano, with his watch-chain resting in folds, like a golden serpent, on the sea-green protuberance of his waistcoat. His immense head lay languidly on one side; and he gently beat time with two of his yellow-white fingers. He highly approved of the music, and tenderly admired Laura's manner of playing—not as poor Harttright used to praise it, with an innocent enjoyment of the sweet sounds, but with a clear, cultivated, practical knowledge of the merits of the composition, in the first place, and of the merits of the player's touch, in the second. As the evening closed in, he begged that the lovely dying light might not be profaned, just yet, by the appearance of the lamps. He came, with his horribly silent tread, to the distant window at which I was standing, to be out of his way and to avoid the very sight of him—he came to ask me to support his protest against the lamps. If any one of them could only have burnt him up, at that moment, I would have gone down to the kitchen, and fetched it myself.

"Surely you like this modest, trembling English twilight?" he said, softly. "Ah! I love it. I feel my inborn admiration of all that is noble and great and good, purified by the breath of Heaven, on an evening like this. Nature has such imperishable charms, such extinguishable tendernesses for me!—I am an old, fat man: talk which would become your lips, Miss Halcombe, sounds like a derision and a mockery on mine. It is hard to be laughed at in my moments of sentiment, as if my soul was like myself, old and overgrown. Observe, dear lady, what a light is dying on the trees! Does it penetrate your heart, as it penetrates mine?"

He paused—looked at me—and repeated the famous lines of Dante on the Evening-time, with a melody and tenderness which added a charm of their own to the matchless beauty of the poetry itself.

"Bah!" he cried suddenly, as the last cadence of those noble Italian words died away on his lips; "I make an old fool of myself, and only weary you all! Let us shut up the window in our bosoms and get back to the matter-of-fact world. Percival! I sanction the admission of the lamps. Lady Glyde—Miss Halcombe—Eleanor, my good wife—which of you will indulge me with a game at dominoes?"

He addressed us all; but he looked especially at Laura. She had learnt to feel my dread of offending him, and she accepted his proposal. It was more than I could have done, at that moment. I could not have sat down at the same table with him, for any consideration. His eyes seemed to reach my inmost soul through the thickening obscurity of the twilight. His voice trembled along every nerve in my body, and turned me hot and cold alternately. The mystery and terror of my dream, which had haunted me, at intervals, all through the evening, now oppressed my mind with an unendurable foreboding and an unutterable awe. I saw the white tomb again, and the veiled woman rising out of it, by Hartright's side. The thought of Laura-welled up like a spring in the depths of my heart, and filled it with waters of bitterness, never, never known to it before. I caught her by the hand, as she passed me on her way to the table, and kissed her as if that night was to part us for ever. While they were all gazing at me in astonishment, I ran out through the low window which was open before me to the ground—ran out to hide from them in the darkness; to hide even from myself.

We separated, that evening, later than usual. Towards midnight, the summer silence was broken by the shuddering of a low, melancholy wind among the trees. We all felt the sudden chill in the atmosphere; but the Count was the first to notice the stealthy rising of the wind. He stopped while he was lighting my candle for me, and held up his hand warningly:

"Listen!" he said. "There will be a change to-morrow."

LIFE IN DANGER.

We take up the pen to plead for a human life in danger.

There is a man now living, and in the full enjoyment of health and strength, whose life will be sacrificed unless a certain point, now under discussion, is rightly decided upon. The scales are hanging at present pretty evenly; official delay and routine in one scale—extra-weighted at Whitehall, by back-stair influence and jobbing (both heavy commodities): the other scale at the Serpentine, containing reason and life and health, but its very metal corroded with the foul gases rising beneath it. Surely it behoves every one

who has any access to the reason scale, to cast into it his weightiest wares in that line, and to hang on to it with all his might, and with all the tenacity of which he is capable.

There is something unimpressive about the sound of "the Serpentine." We have got to look upon that piece of water in a contemptuous manner. It is probably because of its unbusiness-like qualities. We see a broad sheet of shining water, wholly devoted to amusement. We see it covered with unimportant (and water-logged) wherries, with ornamental fowls, and with those over-masted toy schooners, which seedy adults appear to get a living by sending from one side of the river to the other. We see people in the summer months amusing themselves by *not* catching fish in these waters, and in winter by tumbling about upon their frozen surface. What! Attach importance to the Serpentine—why, it is a mere trifler, a thing that lends itself to our amusements, and nothing more. Now, there is a class of men who appear to be triflers on the surface, and who are really attending to the main chance more than many a solemn and business-like commercialist; men who will joke and laugh with you, and who will, in the course of a morning's chat, do an uncommonly good stroke of business with you, almost without your knowing it. The Serpentine is like these jovial workers, and with its holiday outside does an amount of business—in the undertaking line—which would astonish you. Beneath that broad sheet of water, with its grim-crack wherries and its topsy-turvy water-fowl, there are treachery, and poison, and death, unwholesome and pestilent sewage, cramp-engendering springs, sudden holes, and vast disused gravel-pits, filled up with black and noisome mud. Mud! What says the superintendent at the receiving-house of the Royal Humane Society: a gentleman who, living by the bank of the Serpentine, knows more, perhaps, about that gay and innocuous stream than any one else whom we can consult? He says that the mud in the bed of the Serpentine is in some places ten feet deep—thirteen feet and a half of water, and ten feet of mud and slime beneath it. Mud! Why, there is one place in these waters where the same superintendent, sounding the depth of mud with the poles of drags fastened one to another, has been unable to find a bottom at all!

The mud in the bed of the Serpentine is of so horrible and glutinous a kind that sometimes, when an accident has happened to a bather, the men of the Royal Humane Society, hastening to the spot where it has occurred, have felt on lowering their drags the feet and legs of the sufferer struggling violently, and striking against their instruments. His head and body would at such time be immersed and fixed in this bed of sewage, into which it has been necessary at last to plunge the drag itself in order to rescue the drowning man. The mud, too, will get into the air-passages at such times, and lives, that might otherwise have been saved, have been lost, because the lungs have been choked up

with this loathsome slime. Nay, men will be rescued by the Humane Society, will be taken to the receiving-house and restored to life, and will go away and languish for months afterwards, and die at last from the effects of that immersion in the Hyde Park sewer. What does the reader say to this? Is not this a stroke of business on the part of our sportive friend?

Let us fancy our friend without his gay outside, let us imagine his smooth exterior—there is a little scum upon it—removed, and the real depths of his character revealed, would it not be an astonishing disclosure? What should we see, if the water in the Serpentine could suddenly be drawn off, leaving what lies beneath it now, exposed to view? We should see, first of all, a great black ravine of unequal depth, stretching its pestilent width before us. I fancy that its level would be pretty even, because the holes are so filled up with mud, that, except by a slight depression over them, we should hardly know where they were. Into this ooze of filthiness we should throw the first stone that came to hand, and should watch it as it sank into the fat slime and disappeared from view. There is a long course before it, ere it gets to the bottom. It will travel slowly through that dense medium, and haply may meet with bone or two before it has done sinking. And it is beside this black valley, it is on the edge of this abyss of pollution, that we are to spend the hot summer afternoons, using the margin of this cesspool for our promenade and daily lounge. It is over this pit that the wherries float with stench at the prow, and sewage at the helm. It is to this place that our ladies come from their perfumed bed-chambers, TO TAKE THE AIR!

But, suppose we were to spare ourselves the unpleasant surprise? Suppose we come merely to decorate his exterior a little, and make it even gayer than it was before? Suppose we were to organise some system that should get rid of that trifle of scum just spoken of, which gives some warning of what lies beneath? Suppose we were to establish a laundry where his white waistcoats and his capacious shirt-fronts could continually be freshened up and brightened? Would not this answer every purpose, and enable us to leave his hidden qualities alone?

And what can the system submitted to, and adopted by, a recent administration be but this? It was a plan by which the water which this mud had contaminated, was filtered and cleansed, and sent back to be contaminated again. It is not easy to believe that such an experiment could even be the subject of a moment's consideration: much less that this plan could have been adopted, and the expensive works required for its carrying out, actually commenced.

It was a case, this, of singular aggravation. The difficulty which had to be overcome was not one which we were ignorant how to meet. An experiment had already been made, and had

been found to answer, and yet the success of that experiment was to go for nothing. It is terrible to think of the number of lives that used to be sacrificed in St. James's Park, before the admirable plan adopted by Lord Llanover was put in operation. The bed of the water in that park, though not in so bad a state as that of the Serpentine, was unsafe enough to render some measure necessary that should render it less dangerous. The lake was accordingly drained, the mud was cleaned out, the holes were filled up, the bed of the water was reduced to an uniform depth, and a perfect success achieved. Now a similar system is applicable to the Serpentine. No other will meet the present difficulty, and no other, since this has been found to answer so well, should ever be contemplated.

The plan which it is absolutely necessary should be adopted for the cleansing and reformation of the Serpentine, is simple enough. The water should be drawn off, the mud removed—and this before the hot weather—the holes should be filled up, and the bed of the river reduced to an uniform level, with concrete. There must be a slight increase of depth in the mid-channel, and a slight fall from end to end. From two or three feet of water at the western or Kensington Gardens end, the depth of the Serpentine must increase gradually, to six or seven feet at the eastern or Albert Gate extremity. This is indispensable. A graduated scale of the depths of the different parts of the water should be placed on the banks, and no man who was not an experienced swimmer would, of course, venture into the deeper water. At present, no bather knows where he is going, and the little boys who in the summer months run at the top of their speed into the water—which is a favourite amusement with them—will sometimes scamper into a hole where they may drown, with the little heap of clothes which they have just taken off, not half a dozen yards behind them. Under the plan spoken of above, every one would know where he was going, to half an inch—just as he would in a swimming-bath, and, also, as in a swimming-bath, would keep away from the deep end if he were a bad swimmer. And supposing in that small space of comparatively deep water that an accident should happen—which is improbable—the boats of the Royal Humane Society, which are always in the water during the hours appropriated to bathing, would be on the spot, and the drags would act with such certainty on the smooth hard surface that it would hardly be possible for life to become extinct before the sufferer would be rescued.

A tabular statement of the amount of business—in the line hinted at above—which our gay friend the Serpentine has got through in the last fifteen or sixteen years, has been opportunely forwarded to us. We are indebted for these extracts from his commercial “books,” to a certain enemy of his, who, living close to him, is always watching him, perpetually cautioning his victims not to approach him

in his more dangerous moments, and who sometimes, when this caution has been administered in vain, will rescue those who have suffered by his duplicity at the last moment, and will help to patch up the wretched resources with which they have escaped from the clutches of our sportive acquaintance. In the course of those sixteen years, no fewer than 4,184,739 persons did business with him — in the bathing line only—not counting skaters. Out of this number 262 got into such difficulties that the services of the Society, whose place of business has been before referred to as looking over our friend's property, were required to extricate them; that 111 were so mauled and impaired in their means that the Society aforesaid had to take them seriously in hand, and afford them professional assistance of a very important kind before they were in a condition to resume business; and that in 32 cases the resources of the association in question were unavailing, and the unhappy victims were lost.

We subjoin the tabular statement from which we get these facts, merely premising that two additional deaths have occurred since it was drawn up: making the entire number 32, as given above.

Date.	ACCIDENTS FROM BATHING.			SUICIDES.		
	Saved.	Brought to Receiving House.	Killed.	Saved.	Prevented.	Killed.
1844	20	14	3	12	4	7
1845	12	14	1	3	8	8
1846	33	9	2	12	4	5
1847	17	7	1	12	3	2
1848	14	4	2	13	1	4
1849	18	9	1	5	..	5
1850	8	5	2	10	4	6
1851	14	10	1	16	3	8
1852	20	5	5	1	3	9
1853	15	6	..	9	4	4
1854	5	8	1	11	3	3
1855	13	7	..	9	3	7
1856	20	7	4	9	..	7
1857	10	3	3	9	..	10
1858	21	..	3	13	..	3
1859	22	3	1	8	2	7
	262	111	30	152	42	95

In this list of disaster and death there is surely furnished a stronger argument than any other that could be urged for the adoption of the one only course which will render such deplorable accidents almost impossible. Had that course been adopted sixteen years ago, the lives here put down as lost, need *not* have been lost; the man drowned in the Serpentine this very winter might have been saved; and the injury to health, and the shock to the nervous system, inseparable from many of the worse cases of rescue, might have been averted.

We have purposely omitted to take into calculation the deaths by suicide, because it may be said that any one bent on suicide would, if the Serpentine were rendered unavailable for that purpose, find some other means of its accomplishment. Omitting these, then, we yet get an average of two deaths in the Serpentine in the twelvemonth, for the last sixteen years. We might then have begun by pleading for more than a single life, but we prefer confining ourselves to the thought of that ONE MAN, friend perhaps of yours or ours, who will be drowned by this time next year, unless the dangerous bed of the Serpentine is at once set right. We are that man's advocate. Let us implore his judges, by that black list of deaths which has been given above, to consider how surely a life is hanging on their decision. Let us inform them, by the memory of that last death which is fresh in all our memories, and which might have been avoided, to save our client from a similar fate. We will not dwell upon the other advantages which may be conferred on other persons; we will keep to the point with which we started, and—by the wife whom this man may leave a widow, by the children whom he may leave without a father, by some who depend on him, or at least by some who love him—by all these things, and many more—we implore the jury on whom his very existence depends, that they will grant us a verdict, and give us this man's life.

NATURE'S PLANTING.

THE means employed by Nature, the great planter, to effect the dispersion of seeds, and by which the young plants are separated and sent out into the world from their seed-cup homes, are as various and curious as the forms of the seed-cups themselves.

So soon as the seed is ripe, Grew quaintly remarks, Nature taketh several methods for its being duly sown. For, first, the seeds of many plants which affect a peculiar soil or seat, as of arum, poppy, &c., are heavy and small enough, without further care, to fall directly down into the ground. But, if they are so large and light as to be exposed to the wind, they are often furnished with one or more hooks to stay them from straying too far from their proper place. So the seeds of avens have one single hook, those of agrimony and goosegrass many; both the former loving a warm bank, the latter a hedge, for its support. On the contrary, many seeds are furnished with wings or feathers; partly with the help of the wind to carry them when ripe from off the plant, as of the ash, sycamore, maple, mahogany, and trumpet flower, and partly to enable them to make good their flight more or less abroad, so that they may not, by falling together, come up too thick, and that if one should miss a good soil or bed another may hit. So the kernels of pine have wings, yet short, whereby they fly not into the air, but only flutter upon the ground. But

those of cat's-tail, dandelion, and most of the thistle kind have long numerous feathers by which they are wafted every way. The cotton-grass is supplied with so much of this feathery material that it gives a character to the fields in which it grows. Mrs. S. C. Hall said she saw stores of bogs in Ireland looking like fields of snow from the immense quantity of cotton-grass down with which it is covered. Hedges in which the traveller's-joy is abundant have a beautiful appearance at seed time, owing to the silvery plume appearing on the fruit.

The wind is especially useful in wafting the minute, impalpable sporules of cryptogamic plants to considerable distances. It has been supposed that two species of lichen found on the coasts of Bretagne have been brought thither from Jamaica by the prevalence of the south-west wind. This is easily explained by the lightness and minuteness of these seeds, some of which are mere dust, while those of the club-moss are but the eighteen thousandth of an inch in thickness. On the 29th of August, 1830, a lichen suddenly appeared among a plantation of pines in the neighbourhood of Dresden, covering the leaves only, however, on the side nearest to the wind; and at another time the sails of a ship at sea, near Stockholm, were in an instant covered with a sort of lichen. This appearance, which has been explained by supposing that the minute germs came floating invisibly upon the breeze, is said to be common in Persia, Armenia, and Tartary, where the people eagerly eat the lichens, saying that they come from heaven.

Other seeds are scattered, not by flying about, but by being spurted or darted away by the plant itself. The wood-sorrel has its seed-vessel constructed in such a way that, when dry, it bursts open, and in a moment is violently turned inside out. When oats are ripe, the grains are thrown from the flower-cup with a crackling noise, which may be heard in passing near an oat-field on a fine dry day. In the succulent fruit of the squirting cucumber, the cells of which it is composed vary in their size and contents in different parts; and some containing thick matter, becoming distended at the expense of others with thinner matter, the force of endosmose ultimately causes rupture of the valves at their weakest point—that is to say, where they join the stem. When this takes place, the elasticity of the valves sends out the seeds and fluid contents with great force through the opening made by the separation of the stalk. If the touch-me-not balsam is touched it instantly fires a discharge of seeds at the intruder, by the five valves of the seed-vessel curving inwards in a spiral manner, in consequence of the distension of the outer large cells. Grew says "the seeds of heart's-tongue is flung or shot away by the curious contrivance of the seed-case as in coddled asmart, only there the spring moves and curls inward, and here outward, viz. every seed-case is of a spheric figure and girded about with a sturdy spring. The surface of this spring resembles a fine screw, and so soon as this spring

is become stark enough, it suddenly breaks the case in two halves like two little cups, and so flings the seed." Spencer Thomson, in his book on Wild Flowers, says many must have remarked this fact for themselves, when, under the heat of a July sun, their wanderings have led them through some

Path with tangling furze o'errun,

When bursting seed-bells crackle in the sun,
and they have wondered what could be the meaning
of the incessant crack, crack, which seems
momentarily to occur on every side, as if some
fairy folk were firing *feu de joie* to celebrate
the fine weather. Verily, too, the tiny soldiers,
whoever they be, seem to have loaded with something
more than powder, for, after each crack,
the attentive ear might catch the sound as of
dropping shot among the leaves. At last the
eye detects one of the black pods of the broom
or of the gorse in the very act of firing; in one
moment each pod-valve has twisted itself into a spiral,
and sent its seeds, the fairy projectiles,
scattering all around. And thus there is an explanation
of the fairy fusillade, but we find out that spring-guns are in use in Flora's kingdom
instead of Minié rifles.

Derham, in his Physico-Theology, says the plants of the ginger family may be added here to those whose pods fly open and dart out their seed upon a small touch of the hand.

Moisture, as well as dryness, operates in the bursting of seed-vessels. The pod of the Rose of Jericho is so striking an example of this, that we must quote an account of it which appeared in Household Words (vol. xvii. page 341): "This little plant, scarcely six inches high, after the flowering season, loses its leaves, and dries up into the form of a ball. In this condition it is uprooted by the winds, and is carried, blown or tossed, across the desert into the sea. When the wee rose feels the contact of the water, it unfolds itself, expands its branches, and expels its seeds from their seed-vessels. The seeds, after having become thoroughly saturated with sea-water, are carried by the tide and laid upon the sea-shore. From the sea-shore the seeds are blown back again into the desert, where, sprouting roots and leaves, they grow into fruitful plants, which will in their turns, like their ancestors, be whirled into the sea." Dr. Sloane, in his Voyage to Jamaica, gives an account of a plant which he calls the Spirit Leaf. He says: "The admirable contrivance of Nature in this plant is most plain. For the seed-vessels being the best preserver of the seed is there kept from the injuries of air and earth, till it be rainy, when it is a proper time for it to grow, and then it is thrown round the earth, as grain by a skilful sower. When any wet touches the end of the seed-vessel, with a smart noise and a sudden leap it opens itself, and with a spring scatters its seed to a pretty distance round it, where it grows."

Nature has several other methods of planting adapted to individual peculiarities. The screw-like appendages of the crane's-bill seeds assist to roll them to some clink in the earth, and then

screw them into it. The poppy has little pores at the summit of the seed-cup; and the pimpernel splits off a little lid and discloses its well-hoarded treasury, while the cross-flowers, like the wallflower, quietly lift up their sides to let the seeds fall. The willow herbs open elegantly at the top to permit their beautifully arranged and winged germs to take their flight. The ivy-leaved toad-flax carefully buries its seed. The subterraneous clover, as the time for planting approaches, surrounds the seed-vessel with spiny projections, which protect the germs while digging their way down into the soil. The mignonette seed escapes easily by the little bell in which they are contained opening and permitting them to fall as they are perfected.

There are several physical circumstances favourable to nature planting, such as the weight which increases at the same time as the power of holding on diminishes, and the shaking of the wind or the beating of the rain.

Seas, rivers, and currents are among the most effectual means of dispersing the seeds of plants. Monsieur Charles Martin, Professor of Botany at the Montpellier Faculty of Medicine, in a letter to Monsieur Flourens, communicated to the Academy of Sciences, states that, after experimenting upon a great variety of seeds taken haphazard, he finds that two-thirds of them float upon the sea; thus explaining how seeds which Humboldt said must have been borne by plants and trees in Jamaica and Cuba, are thrown on the shores of the Hebrides. The Gulf Stream is supposed to be the principal agent in the diffusion of European plants in the islands of Shetland, Feroe, and Iceland. Many seeds growing near the sea-shore, like the cocoa-nuts of the tropics, are washed away by the waves and carried by the currents, until, becoming heavy and saturated with sea-water, they are left to germinate on far-distant coasts and newly formed islands.

Sea-weeds produce their seeds in a strange manner, assuming rather the character of animals than of plants. The seeds are crowded together in cells on the tough leaf of the plant. These extremely minute seeds are surrounded with little hairs gifted with vibratory motion, which in due time, when the cell bursts, row each seed away to a proper resting-place. An old observer, Dr. Tancred Robinson, says the sudden emptying of the bags of seed causes a great commotion of the water in their neighbourhood; and the departure of the flocks appears to take place at fixed periods, generally betimes in the morning; one sea-weed choosing the hour of eight, and another daybreak.

Animals, even, are to a great extent employed by Nature to assist her in her planting. Seeds often become entangled in their hair and wool; the seeds of agrimony being thus disseminated by sheep. The hooks of the burdock cling to the passing animal, and are carried often miles away. All sorts of animals, including monkeys, squirrels, mice, and birds, carry away, and sometimes hide, seeds, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to serve as food. Gilbert

White says, "Many horse-beans sprang up in my field-walks in the autumn, and are now grown to a considerable height. As the Ewel was in beans last summer, it is most likely that these seeds came from thence; but then the distance is too considerable for them to have been conveyed by mice. It is most probable, therefore, that they were brought by birds, and, in particular, by jays and pies, who seem to have hid them among the grass and moss, and then to have forgotten where they had stowed them. Some peas are growing also in the same situation, and probably under the same circumstances."

But more especially those seeds which are furnished with hard bony coverings to the kernel (as in stone fruit), and are capable of resisting the digestive action of the juice of the stomach, are conveyed by animals in a state fitted for germination. Among our native plants there are the cherry, sloe, haw, and mistletoe, whose seeds are eaten by birds with the pulp. Indeed, the ancient naturalists generally agree in thinking that the mistletoe can only be propagated by its seeds being carried about by, and passing through the bodies of, birds.

Sir T. Pope Blunt, in his Natural History, remarks: "Nutmegs are said to be fertilised after the same manner as Tavernier saith was confirmed to him by persons that lived many years in those parts, whose relation was, 'The nutmeg being ripe, several birds come from the islands towards the south, and devour it whole, but are forced to throw it up again, before it is digested. That the nutmeg, then besmeared with a viscous matter, falling to the ground, takes root, and produces a tree which would never thrive was it planted.'" And M. Thévenot, in his Travels to the Indies, gives this account: "The tree is produced after this manner. There is a kind of birds in the island, that, having picked off the green husk, swallow the nuts, which, having been some time in their stomach, they void by the ordinary way; and they fail not to take root in the place where they fall, and in time to grow up to a tree. This bird is shaped like a cuckoo, and the Dutch prohibit their subjects, under pain of death, to kill any of them."

Ivy berries afford a noble and providential supply for birds in winter and spring, says Gilbert White, for the first severe frost freezes and spoils all the haws, sometimes by the middle of November; but ivy berries do not seem to freeze. And Mr. R. C. Norman remarks that the seeds of ivy are not in general found to grow well, however carefully planted; while that which is self-sown, or sown by birds, under trees and walls, will grow abundantly; from which fact it has been supposed that such mucilaginous seeds require to be passed through some digestive process to render them fruitful.

Yet, notwithstanding, a great many seeds escape all these influences, and either wither or rot, or are totally destroyed by insects.

However, Nature has ensured the preservation of many vegetable species by the truly astonish-

ing number of seeds which she produces. It has been calculated that there are about thirty thousand seeds in every single head of poppy, and if all were to come up, the whole of our globe would in a few years be covered with poppies. One of our native thistles would by the second year of its growth, if all its seeds were to take root, be the progenitor of about five hundred and eighty millions of thistles. In the great cat's-tail (*Typha major*), the seeds, being blown off by the wind, are often lost, but this is made up for by each spike bearing about forty thousand seeds, so that upon the three spikes which every plant commonly produces, there are every year more than a hundred and twenty thousand seeds. The majestic Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria*) bears on every tree from twenty to thirty fruits, and each fruit contains about three hundred kernels. In some parts of the country in which they grow, when left to themselves, these trees form immense forests, extending north and south for eight hundred miles. The tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) has been known to produce on one plant three hundred and sixty thousand seeds; and the annual produce of a single stalk of spleenwort has been estimated at a million.

Many plants in their wild state propagate themselves by shoots. The care taken by Nature to ensure the production of grass is truly wonderful. Even when the leaves are trodden down or consumed, the roots still increase; and the stalks which support the flowers are seldom eaten by cattle, so that the seeds are always allowed to ripen. Some of the grasses growing on the very high mountains, where the heat is not sufficient to ripen the seeds, are propagated by shoots or suckers, which, rising from the root, spread along the ground and then take root themselves. And these grasses, deriving their name from their peculiar structure, are called sucker-bearing (*Stoloniferous*). Other grasses are propagated in a not less remarkable manner: the seeds begin growing within the flower-cup itself (which in grasses is called the husk), until diminutive plants are formed with leaves and roots, and these falling to the ground take root, and then continue to grow like the parent plant. In such cases the grass is called live-born (*Viviparous*). There is a native kind called viviparous fescue-grass, which grows in perfection in Scotland on dry walls, and in the moist crevices of rocks. The lily of the valley spreads itself by means of creepers under the soil, and the verbena by throwing out long shoots which produce roots at their joints. Strawberry seeds are always eaten along with the pulp, therefore the plant is easily made to grow from suckers or young shoots. The mango-trees, which grow in very damp and marshy soil upon the tropical sea-shore, bear their fruit and seeds at the tips of their branches. The seeds do not fall when ripe, but sprout out their roots three or four feet long from the parent tree until they reach the ground. They then fix themselves into the earth, and each plant multiplying in turn in the same way, the progeny of a single

tree will sometimes spread themselves until they may be found covering an area of more than sixty miles.

MY MAID MARIAN.

SPRING comes, with violet eyes unveiled,
Her fragrant lips apart;
And Earth smiles up as tho' she held,
Most honeyed thoughts at heart.
But never more will Spring arise,
Dancing in sparkles of her eyes.

A gracious wind, low-breathing, comes
As from the fields of God;
The old lost Eden newly blooms
From out the sunny sod.
My buried joy stirs with the Earth,
And tries to sun its sweetness forth.

The trees move in their slumbering,
Dreaming of one that's near—
Put forth their feelers for the Spring,
To wake and find her here.
My spirit on the threshold stands,
And stretches out its waiting hands;

Then floweth from me in a stream
Of yearning! wave on wave
Slides thro' the stillness of a dream,
By little Marian's grave.
For all the miracle of Spring,
My long-lost babe will never bring.

Where blooms the golden crocus-burst,
And Winter's tenderling,
There lies my little snowdrop! first
Of flowers in our love's Spring.
How all the year's young beauties blow
About her there, I know, I know.

The blackbird with his warble wet,
The thrush with ready thrill,
Open their hearts to Spring, and let
The influence have its will.
On all around the Spring hath smiled,
But seems to have kissed where lies my child

In purple shadow, and golden shine,
Old Arthur's Seat stands crowned;
Like shapes of silence crystalline,
The great white clouds sail round.
The dead at rest the long day thro',
Lie calm against the pictured blue.

O Marian! my maid Marian!
So strange it seems to me,
That you, the household's darling one,
So soon should cease to be.
Ah, was it that our praying breath
Might kindle heavenward fires of faith?

So much forgiven for your sake,
When bitter words were said!
And little arms about the neck,
With blessings bowed the head.
So happy as we might have been,
Our hearts more close with you between.

Dear, early dewdrop! Such a gleam
Of sun from heaven you drew;
We little thought that smiling beam
Would drink our precious dew.
But back to heaven our dew was kissed,
We saw it pass in mournful mist.

My lowly home was lofty-crowned,
With three sweet budding girls;
Our sacred marriage-ring set round
With darling wee love-pears.
One jewel from the ring is gone!
One fills a grave in Warriston.

We bore her beauty in our breast,
As heaven bears the dawn;
We brooded over her dear nest,
With hearts still closer drawn,
That thrilled and listened, watch'd and throbbed,
And strayed not, yet the nest was robbed.

"Stay yet a little while, beloved!"
In vain our prayerful breath,
Across Heaven's lighted window moved
The shadow of black death.
In vain our hands were stretch'd to save,
There closed the gateways of the grave.

Could my death-vision have darkened up
In her sweet face, my child?
I scarce should see the bitter cup,
I could have drunk, and smiled,
Blessing her with my last wrung breath,
Dear angel in my dream of death.

Her memory is like music we
Have heard some singer sing,
That thrills life thru', and echoingly,
Our hearts for ever ring.
We try it o'er and o'er again,
But ne'er recall the wondrous strain.

My proud heart like a river runs,
Lying awake o' nights,
I see her with the shining ones,
Upon the shining heights;
And a wee angel face will peep
Down, star-like, thro' the veil of sleep.

My yearnings try to get their wings,
And float me up afar,
As in the dawn the skylark springs
To reach some distant star,
That all night long swam down to him
In brightness, but at morn grew dim.

She is a spirit of light, that leavens
The darkness where we wait,
And star-like opens in the heavens
A little golden gate!

Ah, may we wake and find her near,
When work and sleep are over here.

In some far spring of brighter bloom,
More life and ampler breath,
My bud hath burst the folding gloom,
A flower from dusty death.
We wonder will she be much grown,
And how will her new name be known.

I saw her ribboned robe this morn,
Mine own lost little child;
Wee shoes her tiny feet had worn,
And then my heart grew wild.
We only trust our hearts to peep
In on them when we want to weep.

But hearts will break, or eyes must weep,
And so we bend above,
These treasures of old times that keep
The fragrance of young love.
The harvest field, tho' reap'd and bare,
Hath still a patient gleaner there.

I never think of her sweet eyes,
In dusty death now dim,
But waters of my heart arise,
And there they smile and swim.
Forget-me-nots, so blue, so dear,
Swim in the waters of a tear!

How often in the days gone by,
She lifted her dear head,
And stretch'd wee arms for me to lie
Down in her little bed,
And cradled in my happy breast,
Was softly carried into rest.

And now when life is sore oppressed,
And runs with weary wave,
I long to lay me down and rest
In little Marian's grave;
To smile as peaceful as she smiled,
For I am now the nestling child.

The patient calm that comes with years,
Hath made us cease to fret;
Tho' often in the sudden tears,
Dumb hearts will quiver yet!
And each one turns the face, and tries
To hide who looks through parent eyes.

THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

In the late high winds I was blown to a great many places—and indeed, wind or no wind, I generally have extensive transactions on hand in the article of Air—but I have not been blown to any English place lately, and I very seldom have been blown to any English place in my life, where I could get anything good to eat and drink in five minutes, or where, if I sought it, I was received with a welcome.

This is a curious thing to consider. But before (stimulated by my own experiences and the representations of many fellow-travellers of every uncommercial and commercial degree) I consider it further, I must utter a passing word of wonder concerning high winds.

I wonder why metropolitan gales always blow so hard at Walworth. I cannot imagine what Walworth has done, to bring such windy punishment upon itself, as I never fail to find recorded in the newspapers when the wind has blown at all hard. Brixton seems to have something on its conscience; Peckham suffers more than a virtuous Peckham might be supposed to deserve; the howling neighbourhood of Deptford figures largely in the accounts of the ingenious gentlemen who are out in every wind that blows, and to whom it is an ill high wind that blows no good; but, there can hardly be any Walworth left by this time. It must surely be blown away. I have read of more chimney-stacks and house-copings coming down with terrific smashes at Walworth, and of more sacred edifices being nearly (not quite) blown out to sea from the same accursed locality, than I have read of practised thieves with the appearance and manners of gentlemen—a popular phenomenon which never existed on earth out of fiction and a police report. Again: I wonder why people are always blown into the Surrey Canal, and into no other piece of water? Why do people get up early and go

out in groups, to be blown into the Surrey Canal? Do they say to one another, "Welcome Death, so that we get into the newspapers"? Even that would be an insufficient explanation, because even then they might sometimes put themselves in the way of being blown into the Regent's Canal, instead of always saddling Surrey for the field. Some nameless policeman, too, is constantly, on the slightest provocation, getting himself blown into this same Surrey Canal. Will SIR RICHARD MAYNE see to it, and restrain that weak-minded and feeble-bodied constable?

To resume the consideration of the curious question of Refreshment. I am a Briton, and, as such, I am aware that I never will be a slave—and yet I have a latent suspicion that there must be some slavery of wrong custom in this matter.

I travel by railroad. I start from home at seven or eight in the morning, after breakfasting hurriedly. What with skimming over the open landscape, what with mining in the damp bowels of the earth, what with banging booming and shrieking the scores of miles away, I am hungry when I arrive at the "Refreshment" station where I am expected. Please to observe, expected. I have said, I am hungry; perhaps I might say, with greater point and force, that I am to some extent exhausted, and that I need—in the expressive French sense of the word—to be restored. What is provided for my restoration? The apartment that is to restore me, is a wind-trap, cunningly set to inveigle all the draughts in that country-side, and to communicate a special intensity and velocity to them as they rotate in two hurricanes: one, about my wretched head: one, about my wretched legs. The training of the young ladies behind the counter who are to restore me, has been from their infancy directed to the assumption of a defiant dramatic show that I am *not* expected. It is in vain for me to represent to them by my humble and conciliatory manners, that I wish to be liberal. It is in vain for me to represent to myself, for the encouragement of my sinking soul, that the young ladies have a pecuniary interest in my arrival. Neither my reason nor my feelings can make head against the cold glazed glare of eye with which I am assured that I am not expected, and not wanted. The solitary man among the bottles would sometimes take pity on me, if he dared, but he is powerless against the rights and mights of Woman. (Of the page I make no account, for, he is a boy, and therefore the natural enemy of Creation.) Chilling fast, in the deadly tornadoes to which my upper and lower extremities are exposed, and subdued by the moral disadvantage at which I stand, I turn my disconsolate eyes on the refreshments that are to restore me. I find that I must either scald my throat by insanely ladling into it, against time and for no wager, brown hot water stiffened with flour; or, I must make myself flaky and sick with Banbury cake; or, I must stuff into my delicate organisation, a currant pine cushion which I know will swell into immeasurable dimensions when it has got there;

or, I must extort from an iron-bound quarry, with a fork, as if I were farming an inhospitable soil, some glutinous lumps of gristle and grease, called pork-pie. While thus forlornly occupied, I find that the depressing banquet on the table is, in every phase of its profoundly unsatisfactory character, so like the banquet at the meanest and shabbiest of evening parties, that I begin to think I must have "brought down" to supper, the old lady unknown, blue with cold, who is setting her teeth on edge with a cool orange, at my elbow—that the pastrycook who has compounded for the company on the lowest terms per head, is a fraudulent bankrupt, redeeming his contract with the stale stock from his window—that, for some unexplained reason, the family giving the party have become my mortal foes, and have given it on purpose to affront me. Or, I fancy that I am "breaking up" again, at the evening conversazione at school, charged two-and-sixpence in the half-year's bill; or breaking down again at that celebrated evening party given at Mrs. Bogles's boarding-house when I was a boarder there, on which occasion Mrs. Bogles was taken in execution by a branch of the legal profession who got in as the harp, and was removed (with the keys and subscribed capital) to a place of durance, half an hour prior to the commencement of the festivities.

Take another case.

Mr. Grazinglands, of the Midland Counties, came to London by railroad one morning last week, accompanied by the amiable and fascinating Mrs. Grazinglands. Mr. G. is a gentleman of a comfortable property, and had a little business to transact at the Bank of England, which required the concurrence and signature of Mrs. G. Their business disposed of, Mr. and Mrs. Grazinglands viewed the Royal Exchange, and the exterior of St. Paul's Cathedral. The spirits of Mrs. Grazinglands then gradually beginning to flag, Mr. Grazinglands (who is the tenderest of husbands) remarked with sympathy, "Arabella, my dear, I fear you are faint." Mrs. Grazinglands replied, "Alexander, I am rather faint; but don't mind me, I shall be better presently." Touched by the feminine meekness of this answer, Mr. Grazinglands looked in at a pastrycook's window, hesitating as to the expediency of lunching at that establishment. He beheld nothing to eat, but butter in various forms, slightly charged with jam, and languidly frizzling over tepid water. Two ancient turtle-shells, on which was inscribed the legend, "SOUPS," decorated a glass partition within, enclosing a stuffy alcove, from which a ghastly mockery of a marriage-breakfast spread on a rickety table, warned the terrified traveller. An oblong box of stale and broken pastry at reduced prices, mounted on a stool, ornamented the doorway; and two high chairs that looked as if they were performing on stilts, embellished the counter. Over the whole, a young lady presided, whose gloomy haughtiness as she surveyed the street, announced a deep-seated grievance against society, and an implacable determination to be avenged. From a beetle-haunted kitchen

below this institution, fumes arose, suggestive of a class of soup which Mr. Grazinglands knew, from painful experience, enfeebles the mind, distends the stomach, forces itself into the complexion, and tries to ooze out at the eyes. As he decided against entering, and turned away, Mrs. Grazinglands, becoming perceptibly weaker, repeated, "I am rather faint, Alexander, but don't mind me." Urged to new efforts by these words of resignation, Mr. Grazinglands looked in at a cold and floury baker's shop, where utilitarian buns unrelieved by a currant consorted with hard biscuits, a stone filter of cold water, a hard pale clock, and a hard little old woman with flaxen hair, of an undeveloped-farinaceous aspect, as if she had been fed upon seeds. He might have entered even here, but for the timely remembrance coming upon him that Jairing's was but round the corner.

Now, Jairing's being an hotel for families and gentlemen, in high repute among the midland counties, Mr. Grazinglands plucked up a great spirit when he told Mrs. Grazinglands she should have a chop there. That lady, likewise, felt that she was going to see Life. Arriving on that gay and festive scene, they found the second waiter, in a flabby undress, cleaning the windows of the empty coffee-room, and the first waiter, denuded of his white tie, making up his cruetts behind the Post-office Directory. The latter (who took them in hand) was greatly put out by their patronage, and showed his mind to be troubled by a sense of the pressing necessity of instantly smuggling Mrs. Grazinglands into the obscurest corner of the building. This slighted lady (who is the pride of her division of the county) was immediately conveyed, by several dark passages, and up and down several steps, into a penitential apartment at the back of the house, where five invalided old plate-warmers leaned up against one another under a discarded old melancholy sideboard, and where the wintry leaves of all the dining-tables in the house lay thick. Also, a sofa, of incomprehensible form regarded from any sofane point of view, murmured "Bed;" while an air of mingled fluffiness and heel-taps, added, "Second Waiter's." Sequestered in this dismal hold, objects of a mysterious distrust and suspicion, Mr. Grazinglands and his charming partner waited twenty minutes for the smoke (for it never came to a fire), twenty-five minutes for the sherry, half an hour for the table-cloth, forty minutes for the knives and forks, three-quarters of an hour for the chops, and an hour for the potatoes. On settling the little bill—which was not much more than the day's pay of a Lieutenant in the navy—Mr. Grazinglands took heart to remonstrate against the general quality and cost of his reception. To whom the waiter replied, substantially, that Jairing's made it a merit to have accepted him on any terms; "for," added the waiter (unmistakably coughing at Mrs. Grazinglands, the pride of her division of the county), "when individuals is not staying in the 'Ouse, their favours is not as a rule looked upon as making it worth Mr. Jairings's while; nor is it, indeed, a style of business Mr. Jairing

wishes." Finally, Mr. and Mrs. Grazinglands passed out of Jairing's hotel for Families and Gentlemen, in a state of the greatest depression, scorned by the bar; and did not recover their self-respect for several days.

Or take another case. Take your own case.

You are going off by railway, from any Terminus. You have twenty minutes for dinner, before you go. You want your dinner, and, like Doctor Johnson, sir, you like to dine. You present to your mind, a picture of the refreshment-table at that terminus. The conventional shabby evening party supper—accepted as the model for all termini and all refreshment stations, because it is the last repast known to this state of existence of which any human creature would partake, but in the direst extremity—sickens your contemplation, and your words are these: "I cannot dine on stale sponge-cakes that turn to sand in the mouth. I cannot dine on shining brown patties, composed of unknown animals within, and offering to my view the device of an indigestible star-fish in leaden pie-crust without. I cannot dine on a sandwich that has long been pining under an exhausted receiver. I cannot dine on barley-sugar. I cannot dine on Toffee." You repair to the nearest hotel, and arrive, agitated, in the coffee-room.

It is a most astonishing fact that the waiter is very cold to you. Account for it how you may, smooth it over how you will, you cannot deny that he is cold to you. He is not glad to see you, he does not want you, he would much rather you hadn't come. He opposes to your flushed condition, an immovable composure. As if this were not enough, another waiter, born, as it would seem, expressly to look at you in this passage of your life, stands at a little distance, with his napkin under his arm and his hands folded, looking at you with all his might. You impress on your waiter that you have ten minutes for dinner, and he proposes that you shall begin with a bit of fish which will be ready in twenty. That proposal declined, he suggests—as a neat originality—"a veal or mutton cutlet." You close with either cutlet, any cutlet, anything. He goes, leisurely, behind a door and calls down some unseen shaft. A ventriloquial dialogue ensues, tending finally to the effect that veal only, is available on the spur of the moment. You anxiously call out, "Veal then!" Your waiter, having settled that point, returns to array your tablecloth, with a table napkin folded cocked-hat-wise (slowly, for something out of window engages his eye), a white wine-glass, a green wine-glass, a blue finger-glass, a tumbler, and a powerful field battery of fourteen castors with nothing in them; or at all events—which is enough for your purpose—with nothing in them that will come out. All this time, the other waiter looks at you—with an air of mental comparison and curiosity, now, as if it had occurred to him that you are rather like his brother. Half your time gone, and nothing come but the jug of ale and the bread, you implore your waiter to "see after

that cutlet, waiter; pray do!" He cannot go at once, for he is carrying in seventeen pounds of American cheese for you to finish with, and a small Landed Estate of celery and watercress. The other waiter changes his leg, and takes a new view of you—doubtfully, now, as if he had rejected the resemblance to his brother, and had begun to think you more like his aunt or his grandmother. Again you beseech your waiter with pathetic indignation, to "see after that cutlet!" He steps out to see after it, and by-and-by, when you are going away without it, comes back with it. Even then, he will not take the sham silver-cover off, without a pause for a flourish, and a look at the musty cutlet as if he were surprised to see it—which cannot possibly be the case, he must have seen it so often before. A sort of fur has been produced upon its surface by the cook's art, and, in a sham silver vessel staggering on two feet instead of three, is a cutaneous kind of sauce, of brown pimples and pickled cucumber. You order the bill, but your waiter cannot bring your bill yet, because he is bringing, instead, three flinty-hearted potatoes and two grim head of brocoli, like the occasional ornaments on area railings, badly boiled. You know that you will never come to this pass, any more than to the cheese and celery, and you imperatively demand your bill; but it takes time to get, even when gone for, because your waiter has to communicate with a lady who lives behind a sash-window in a corner, and who appears to have to refer to several Ledgers before she can make it out—as if you had been staying there a year. You become distracted to get away, and the other waiter, once more changing his leg, still looks at you—but suspiciously, now, as if you had begun to remind him of the party who took the great-coats last winter. Your bill at last brought and paid, at the rate of sixpence a mouthful, your waiter reproachfully reminds you that "attendance is not charged for a single meal," and you have to search in all your pockets for sixpence more. He has a worse opinion of you than ever, when you have given it to him, and lets you out into the street with the air of one saying to himself, as you cannot doubt he is, "I hope we shall never see you here again!"

Or, take any other of the numerous travelling instances in which, with more time at your disposal, you are, have been, or may be, equally ill served. Take the old-established Bull's Head with its old-established knife-boxes on its old-established sideboards, its old-established flue under its old-established four-post bedsteads in its old-established airless rooms, its old-established frouziness up-stairs and down stairs, its old-established cookery, and its old-established principles of plunder. Count up your injuries, in its side-dishes of ailing sweetbreads in white poultices, of apothecaries' powders in rice for curry, of pale stewed bits of calf ineffectually relying for an adventitious interest on force-meat balls. You have had experience of the old-established Bull's Head's stringy fowls, with

lower extremities like wooden legs, sticking up out of the dish; of its cannibalic boiled mutton, gushing horribly among its capers, when carved; of its little dishes of pastry—roofs of spermaceti ointment, erected over half an apple or four gooseberries. Well for you if you have yet forgotten the old-established Bull's Head's fruity port: whose reputation was gained solely by the old-established price the Bull's Head put upon it, and by the old-established air with which the Bull's Head set the glasses and D'Oyleys on, and held that Liquid Gout to the three-and-sixpenny wax-candle, as if its old-established colour hadn't come from the dyer's.

Or lastly, take to finish with, two cases that we all know, every day.

We all know the new hotel near the station, where it is always gusty, going up the lane which is always muddy, where we are sure to arrive at night, and where we make the gas start awfully when we open the front door. We all know the flooring of the passages and staircases that is too new, and the walls that are too new, and the house that is haunted by the ghost of mortar. We all know the doors that have cracked, and the cracked shutters through which we get a glimpse of the disconsolate moon. We all know the new people who have come to keep the new hotel, and who wish they had never come, and who (inevitable result) wish we had never come. We all know how much too scant and smooth and bright the new furniture is, and how it has never settled down, and cannot fit itself into right places, and will get into wrong places. We all know how the gas, being lighted, shows maps of Damp upon the walls. We all know how the ghost of mortar passes into our sandwich, stirs our negus, goes up to bed with us, ascends the pale bedroom chimney, and prevents the smoke from following. We all know how a leg of our chair comes off, at breakfast in the morning, and how the dejected waiter attributes the accident to a general greenness pervading the establishment, and informs us, in reply to a local inquiry, that he is thankful to say he is an entire stranger in that part of the country, and is going back to his own connexion on Saturday.

We all know, on the other hand, the great station hotel belonging to the company of proprietors, which has suddenly sprung up in the back outskirts of any place we like to name, and where we look out of our palatial windows, at little back yards and gardens, old summer-houses, fowl-houses, pigeon-traps, and pigsties. We all know this hotel in which we can get anything we want, after its kind, for money; but where nobody is glad to see us, or sorry to see us, or minds (our bill paid) whether we come, or go, or how, or when, or why, or cares about us. We all know this hotel, where we have no individuality, but put ourselves into the general post, as it were, and are sorted and disposed of according to our division. We all know that we can get on very well indeed at such a place, but still not perfectly well; and this may be, because the place is largely wholesale, and there is

a lingering personal retail interest within us that asks to be satisfied.

To sum up. My uncommercial travelling has not yet brought me to the conclusion that we are close to perfection in these matters. And just as I do not believe that the end of the world will ever be near at hand, so long as any of the very tiresome and arrogant people who constantly predict that catastrophe are left in it, so, I shall have small faith in the Hotel Millennium, while any of the uncomfortable superstitions I have glanced at, remain in existence.

ODD FISH.

MUTE as a fish, is not a true proverb all the world over, and fish out of water is not all the world over the same image of gasping helplessness. The perch we know to be a hardy fish ; he swims near the surface, leaps into the air for flies, and can be carried without hurt in damp grass from pond to pond. But how shall the European notion of a hardy perch cover the marvellous performance of some of the perches of the East ! Aristotle's pupil, Theophrastus, after treating of a fish called *Exocetus*, that was in the habit of coming ashore to sleep, proceeded to tell of the small fishes that leave rivers of India to wander like frogs on the land, and of others found near Babylon, which, when the streams fail, leave their dry beds and travel off in search of food, " moving themselves along by means of their fins and their tails."

Yarrell relates that eels kept in a garden, when the time came at which they should go to the sea to spawn, left their pond, and were invariably found moving eastward, in the direction of the sea. Anglers observe also that fish newly caught, when placed out of sight of water, always struggle towards it in their efforts to escape. In Kirby's Bridgewater Treatise we read of a migratory fish, called *Swampine*, numerous in the fresh waters of Carolina, and in ponds liable to become dry in summer. When caught and placed on the ground, the *Swampines* always directed themselves towards the nearest water, though they could not see it. The *Doras* of Guiana have been caught upon their pilgrimage over dry land in search of water in such numerous companies that negroes have filled baskets with them. Pallegoix tells of three kinds of fish which traverse the damp grass in Siam; and Sir John Bowring says that in ascending and descending the river Meinam to Bangkok, he was amused with the sight of fishes which, leaving the river, glided over the wet banks, and disappeared amongst the trees of the jungle.

The fishes who possess this power, generally have the pharyngeal bones which are at the back of the mouth about the gullet, disposed in a labyrinth of plates and cells, whereby moisture is retained for a long time, to exude slowly and keep the gills damp. The fullest account of the walking fish, as well as of the singing fish, to which we shall pay some attention presently,

is given by Sir Emerson Tennent, in his work on Ceylon. Upon that excellent work, therefore, we draw again for information.

The most famous walker among fishes of Ceylon is a perch, closely related to the climbing perch of the zoologists, called by the Singhalese, *Kavaya*. It is about half a foot long, with a round, scaly head, and strongly-toothed edges to its gill-covers. Helped by the moist labyrinth in its gullet-bones, this little fellow boldly leaves his pool, choosing to travel by night, or in the early morning while the grass is damp with dew ; but sometimes he is to be met with, in case of urgent necessity, travelling even along a hot and dusty gravel road under the mid-day sun.

In all these travelling fishes, the bony column of the spine is said to be remarkably large. They are not, in Ceylon, perch alone. They were chub that Mr. Morris, government agent of Trincomalie, saw, on the falling of a heavy shower, after the dry season, struggle up through the grass in the rills formed by the trickling of the rain. There was hardly water enough to cover them, nevertheless they made rapid progress up the slope of a knoll that was surmounted by a tank. A pelican had lost no time in taking up her position by the pool, into which fish were swarming, and two bushels of them were collected by the followers of Mr. Morris. The same gentleman tells how, when the tanks shrink into little pools, the fish are to be seen crowding by thousands in the cruelly blue mud, and how, when the drying up advances, and the surface fish are left uncovered, they crawl away in search of water. "In one place," he says, "I saw hundreds diverging in every direction from the tank they had just abandoned, to a distance of fifty or sixty yards, and still travelling onwards. In going this distance, however, they must have used muscular exertion sufficient to have taken them half a mile on level ground, for at these places all the cattle and wild animals of the neighbourhood had latterly come to drink, so that the surface was everywhere indented with footmarks, in addition to the cracks in the surrounding baked mud, into which the fish tumbled in their progress. In these holes, which were deep, and the sides perpendicular, they remained to die, and were carried off by kites and crows." They are these fishes, or others very like them, who descend into the wet mud of drying pools, and, when it is hard-baked, lie torpid until the rains bring a return of water : a strange habit, which we have already described in speaking generally of the animal life of Ceylon. Whether the walking fishes of Ceylon deserve also the name of climbing perch, is doubtful. Beyond the up-hill work to which we have referred, there is no evidence of their possession of a climbing power, except in the fact that at a Singhalese fishing station the staked enclosures for the stoppage of fish were found to be covered with netting, and the purpose of this being asked, it was answered "that some of the fish climbed up the sticks and got over."

On the Ganges, the fish called the climbing perch is remarkable for its tenacity of life. The Ganges boatmen have been known to keep him for five or six days in an earthen pot without water, and, when taking him out for use, they find him as lively and fresh as when caught. Two Danish naturalists, living at Tranquebar, testify that they have seen this fish ascend trees on the coast of Coromandel. Daldorf, who was lieutenant in the Danish East India Company's service, informed Sir Joseph Banks that in the year seventeen hundred and ninety-one he had taken the fish from a moist hollow in the stem of a Palmyra palm that grew near to a lake. He saw him when already five feet from the ground struggling to get still higher; hanging by his toothed gill-covers, bending his tail to the left, fixing his tail fin in the clefts of the bark, and then, by stretching out the body, urging his way up. Why he went up the tree, when there was a whole lake of water at its base, he had no voice to tell, and no man has wit to discover. Nevertheless, even a thousand years ago, the compiler of *The Travels of Two Mahomedans*, says that he was told by Suleyman, who visited India in the ninth century, of a fish which leaving the water climbed cocoa-nut palms to drink their sap, and then returned into the sea.

Of the singing fish, to whose performances we now give ear, Sir Emerson says that on visiting Batticaloa, in September, 1848, he made some inquiries about musical sounds, said to be heard issuing from the bottom of the lake at several places, both above and below the ferry opposite the old Dutch fort, and supposed by the natives to come from a fish. The story was confirmed, and one of the spots whence the sounds proceeded was pointed out between the pier and a certain rock which intersects the channel. They were said to be heard at night, and most distinctly when the moon was nearest the full; and they were said to resemble the faint, sweet notes of an *Aolian harp*. Here was a romantic creature! Fishermen were sent for, who said that their fathers before them had known of the music that came from that spot. It only came during the dry season, and ceased when the lake was swollen by the freshes after the rain. They believed the voice to proceed from a shell, known by a Taniel name that means the "crying shell," and being sent in search of such a shell, returned with living specimens of different shells, chiefly *Littorina levis* and *Cerithium palustre*.

In the evening, when the moon had risen, Sir Emerson took a boat and accompanied the fishermen to the spot pointed out. They rowed about two hundred yards north-east of the jetty by the fort gate; there was not a breath of wind nor a ripple, except that caused by the dip of their oars; and on coming to the point mentioned, our countryman distinctly heard the sounds in question. They came up from the water like the gentle thrills of a musical chord, or faint vibrations of a wine-glass when its rim is rubbed by a wet finger. It was not one sustained note, but a multitude of tiny sounds, each clear and distinct in itself, the sweetest treble mingling

with the lowest bass. On applying the ear to the woodwork of the boat, the volume of vibration was increased. The sounds varied considerably at different points on the surface of the lake, as if the animals from which they proceeded were more numerous in particular spots; and occasionally the boat rowed out of hearing of them altogether, but on returning to the old place the old sounds were again heard. There could be no doubt, therefore, that the concert of fishes was assembled at a fixed spot under water.

THE DEMON OF HOMBURG.

In England, the chief gamblers by profession are considered highly respectable people; the country is proud of them, and they sit amongst our lawgivers. The Stock Exchange is their gambling-house. Nevertheless, we should think it highly improper if the English Government established open gambling-houses for its own advantage. Some of the continental governments, while they prohibit hazard play, not only have their state lotteries carried on under the direct management of governmental officers, but also sanction and protect true gambling dens. In German watering-places, these establishments are licensed by the states, to whom they pay a heavy tax. Yet they are all in countries where a game of hazard is prohibited by the laws. The chief of these places are Baden-Baden, Ems, Homburg, Kissingen, Kothen, Pyrmont, Wiesbaden, Wilhelmsbad, &c. The governments of these places are so perfectly conscious of the ruin caused by such establishments, that their own subjects are not permitted to make use of them. In Homburg, the law even forbids the inhabitants to live intimately with gamblers and visitors! Trespassers are fined from thirty to one hundred and fifty florins. Thus the gambling dens fairly replace the old robbers' haunts of which the ruins ornament the borders of the Rhine. The German lords, whose ancestors once lived in such frowning castles, have not lost their taste for plundering unwary travellers; only, instead of committing robberies themselves by open force, they sell to professional sharpers the sole right of plunder, thus degrading themselves to become accomplices of greedy rogues. As an excuse for the licensing of gambling-tables, they say that their watering-places could not exist without them; but many Austrian spas are quite as prosperous as any of the places we have named, though not disgraced by any gambling.

The English are great travellers; and perhaps more than other people glad to bet; they are considered very good prey by these thieves, although of late Americans and Russians have been honoured equally as willing victims. How are they dealt with—in Bad Homburg, for example, which is now the foulest plague-spot in all Germany?

The Landgraviat of Hesse-Homburg, with about six thousand inhabitants, is at the foot of

the Taunus mountains, and not far from Frankfort. The capital is Homburg vor der Hoehe (before the hills), so called to distinguish it from other places of the same name. Some twenty years ago this little town was scarcely known to any but its neighbours. Those of its inhabitants who were not employed in the service of the government or of the household of the prince, lived either by farming or by the alms which the Landgravine distributed. She was a sister of our King George IV., who lived here in great splendour on an allowance which the Homburgs thought very extravagant. Her rooms were lighted up every night by numerous wax candles, of which the remainders were burnt in almost every house in Homburg to the despair of the only chandler, who had his prospects in life darkened by her highness's illuminations. Her end, however, and that of the income she spent, was severely felt by the country, and, yet more, by her husband the Landgrave, whose revenue was not equal to his dignity, and who found it prudent to enter as a general the Austrian army. Having lost his country by Napoleon I., and always taken part with the allies, he managed, at the Congress of Vienna, to get a considerable addition to his territory in the county of Meisenheim, with ten thousand inhabitants. He was, however, only the prince of the country, not its owner, and his revenue was not much increased.

Paris was formerly the Paradise of gamblers. Louis Philippe closed the gambling-houses and expelled their tenants from France. Most of them went to Germany, many of them to Frankfort; but they could not prosper there till the arrival of two brothers Blané, who had been gamblers on 'Change in France, which they had good reason for quitting. At Frankfort they met with two master gamblers and a staff of French croupiers, and then they conceived the idea of establishing a special gambling-place.

Everywhere in the Taunus mountain mineral springs are to be found. Homburg has them also, and some other favourable circumstances led the brothers Blané to select this little innocent town for the seat of their projected gambling hell. They had made the acquaintance of an old friend of the Landgrave of Homburg and an old rich and unprincipled baroness. By these helpers, the transactions with the Homburg Government and the Landgrave were contrived, and at last the prince was induced to grant an audience to our adventurers. A mason, working near the open window of the room where the Landgrave received them, was an unseen witness of the rather curious conversation, and through him the particulars transpired; so, at least, it is said in Homburg. We have only to do with the result. The prince resisted for some time the shameful proposition, but having a small income, he at last consented, and a document was signed by which the brothers Blané were invested with all the exclusive rights they sought.

Experience of Wiesbaden and Baden had proved that this sort of business is very profit-

able. There was no want, therefore, of capital; many, indeed, regretted that the company was limited. In an astonishingly short time there rose before the eyes of the wondering Homburgians a temple of vice, grander than any of their churches. This happened three-and-twenty years ago. The greater part of the inhabitants of the place, dazzled by the prospects of trade pointed out to them, lent themselves to the scheme, and sided for once with their paternal prince. The modest houses of the simple farmers and peasants have vanished, and where they stood palaces have been erected ready to accommodate the rich fools of all nations. The swine which mingled freely with the rustics in the street have been changed into ladies and gentlemen. The Haymarket in the evening, among Londoners, is but a pale reflexion of the aspect of the streets of Homburg during the whole summer, and a part even of winter.

How has the ascendancy of Homburg been secured? Simply by advertising in the papers of Europe and America, and chiefly because of the following little clause in the advertisements: "The game of Trente et Quarante is played with a Quart de Refait, and the Roulette with Single Zero, which arrangement offers to the players at Trente et Quarante seventy-five per cent more advantage than any other bank, and at Roulette fifty per cent." In other words, the bank of Homburg cheats the gambling public fifty per cent less than those at the other Rhenish watering-places. The ruin of the gambler, who is attracted by this promise, is in Homburg only more protracted, although quite as certain as elsewhere. Yet, the whole gambling world went almost crazy over it. Even old professional gamblers, who supposed they understood trente et quarante and roulette, predicted speedy ruin to the foolish bankers; particularly in face of the unheard-of splendour of the buildings they erected. It was the almost general belief that these advantages would and must be soon revoked, and all the gamblers rushed to Homburg to make hay while such a sun as this was shining. But the result proved that, notwithstanding the immense sums spent in buildings and the laying out of grounds, high wages paid to their obliging prince, and expenses amounting to about one hundred pounds a day, the undertakers did not become bankrupt, but paid to the shareholders a dividend of not less than forty per cent.

An alley of orange-trees—each costing about forty pounds—leads across the park to the famed palace of play. Through a noble portico the victim enters the hall, where he is received by liveried footmen ready to take charge of his hat, stick, and overcoat. It is advisable to use their services, for a good hat or coat left anywhere in the saloons might prove too irresistible a temptation to one of the numberless marquises, counts, and barons prowling hereabout. In front of us, as we enter, is a splendid ball-room; but we turn to the left, and then to the right, straight on: that is the way to the devil's sanctuary. We find a splendid hall longer than it is wide,

and are almost dazzled by the glaring splendour of it. From the ceiling, adorned with pictures, hang dark bronze chandeliers bearing numberless lights, multiplied again and again by the magnificent looking-glasses placed at each end of the gorgeous chamber. A long range of high windows, separated from each other by splendid marble columns, open to a view on the park: All the curtains, draperies, and furniture are of dark red velvet. And there is a little too much gilding, as one might expect.

In the middle of this hall are placed two oblong tables, with a space of fifteen yards between them, both covered with green cloth: one of them is the roulette, the other the trente-et-un table. Let nobody think of a gambling-table as a board surrounded by men in despair. During thirty years' acquaintance with the German gambling haunts, I have not witnessed one violent scene, nor heard even a shriek. What I have seen, has, with a few trifling exceptions, been much more ludicrous than tragical. There do occur shocking catastrophes; but very rarely in the gambling-house itself. The agents of the Spielpachter keep a sharp eye on all desperate people likely to be inconsiderate enough to injure the reputation of the bank by publicly expressing their despair.

The tables are densely crowded by people of both sexes who have the outward appearance of fine ladies and gentlemen. It is true that many of them look pale and worn, but we are at a watering-place to which visitors are supposed to come chiefly for the recruiting of their health. Some have an ugly roguish look, but we know many honest gentlemen afflicted with the same. Some are flushed, but the room is warm, and nobody can help feeling a little excited by a mere following of the chances of the game. Most of the people we observe are smiling, or appear indifferent, and the handsome ladies are coquetting. The highest aim of our education is with many to be able to conceal the passions working in us. It requires a tolerably high talent for observation to be able to look through this curtain of assumed indifference, and get at the agitated minds of these unhappy fools.

In the centre of the table before the four croupiers, facing each other, are piled up small paper rolls of gold, and heaps of gold and silver. The whole tableau is spread with gold and silver, the stakes of the punters. As many of them as have room sit at the table; these are generally the old players, and their game is best worth following. Many of these have before them little printed tickets, upon which they mark with a pin after each coup whether it was red or black. It is a foolish amusement, held to be important as a means of finding out the system upon which accident works in this game, in order to form certain rules for the direction of the speculator. The only sure system of winning is that followed by the bank.

There is no loud talking in this hall, people speak with each other in whispers. There is the stillness of a church with the air of a ball-room. Only the priests of this unhallowed

temple dare to speak aloud, and the ivory ball is to be heard turning in the disk, until it clicks against some metal points in it before falling into its rest. The monotonous "Faites votre jeu" (Make your game), "Rien ne va plus" (No stake admitted now), "Trente-deux; noir; pair et passe," is repeated from morning to night; even the money falls without noise on the green cloth when dexterously thrown to a winner by one of the croupiers.

These croupiers are all alike. They have a tired, hang-dog expression. They are paid either by the day or the year. Those who attend to the roulette received, when the house opened in Homburg, one hundred and twenty pounds a year, and at the trente-et-un, one hundred and sixty pounds. After 1848 their pay was raised to two hundred and two hundred and fifty pounds. Most of them are ruined gamblers; or persons unable to get on in the world, who become hardened to the disgrace of their new calling. They are despised and even hated by the gamblers. Their position as regards the public is that of a player's servant in old times, whose very touch was a pollution. Their masters of course do not trust them more than they can help; they watch them closely, and set over them other rogues as spies. In spite of this vigilance many of these fellows manage to rob the robber. One of them was in the habit of taking a pinch of snuff after each coup, from a snuff-box which was standing before him. At the bottom of the box was some adhesive stuff, so that as often as its owner put it down upon a single or double louis d'or, this was secured. Another wore very high and stiff collars, that one cannot help touching very often if they do not fit exactly. Nobody thought anything about the old croupier's frequent jerking at his uncomfortable collars. At each jerk, however, he contrived to slip behind his high collar a gold piece, which slid down into a belt worn by him over the shirt.

One of the croupiers occasioned a great deal of confusion by counterfeiting the gold rolls used at the bank. He covered a round stick of lead, and sealed it with the signet of the bank, of which he had taken an impression. Since that time the gold rolls are ripped open in the middle to expose the gold inside.

These croupiers form, however, only an inferior part of the staff of the bank; most of them come from Paris. Everybody knows them as servants of the banker, and distrusts them. The more important servants are not recognised so easily. They are to be found not only in Homburg. We may meet them in the saloons and clubs in Paris, London, Vienna, Petersburg, and at other places, where the rich and the idle congregate. They are the pensioners of the bank, paid either by the year or by a share in any plunder obtained by their means. Most of them are ruined gamblers, or other adventurers of either sex. A genteel air is their necessary qualification. In Homburg particularly it is well to distrust fine and amiable gentlemen, and all the more for their high-sounding names

or ribbons in their button-holes. Amongst them are many ruined barons and dismissed military officers, well connected and unsuspected. The female staff is yet more dangerous for foolish men. It includes the most respectable-looking old ladies, having their liveried footmen in attendance, riding, perhaps, in emblazoned carriages. It includes young bewitching widows, of course marchionesses, countesses, or baronesses, with names beginning with Saint, probably because most of them come from the neighbourhood of Notre-Dame de Lorette in Paris. You meet them in all the hotels, and at the promenades, their fresh toilettes exciting the admiration of many a real lady. Some of them have husbands with them at whose appearance one cannot help wondering. They look as if not at home in their clothes. Their hands are not over clean, and a man of the world suspects at once the brilliant rings upon their vulgar fingers. They are, however, rarely seen with their more elegant wives, and keep carefully out of the way if these are in gay company. Many of those ladies may be seen at the gambling-table, piles of gold before them, and playing eagerly. The gold belongs to the bank, and that fellow sitting upon a high stool behind the croupiers of the middle keeps a sharp eye upon their fingers through his tortoiseshell-mounted spectacles. They are decoy-ducks, of course, and they catch many geese.

There are many degrees in this service of the bank. Some of its servants are employed only as spies. It is their business to watch comrades, and to get true information as to the money and the whereabouts of casual visitors to Homburg. Amongst them are hotel-keepers, waiters, commissioners, &c., who have themselves an interest in the same matters.

Since the establishment of the bank the Landgrave gave up his position as lord of the place. The banker is more prince in Homburg than the prince himself. An officer of the state with a hundred pounds of pay is already one of a high rank, and there is, probably, no one employed by the government in Homburg who can boast of a salary of three hundred pounds a year. Before the shameful transformation of the town a family might live in Homburg decently on fifty pounds a year, as it is still the case in many other parts of Germany; but now the place has become more expensive, and the government servants must look out for an addition to their income. Most of them let lodgings; but not all have houses, and they soon find that it is their interest to stick to the bank. The consequence is obvious. Formerly it was the fashion of the subjects to change even their religion when the prince did, and we must not wonder too much if the Homburgians now follow the lead of the Landgrave. It is said that the police is more in the service and pay of the bank than in that of the prince or country, and that it is the same with all the tribunals. Facts seem to prove it. We think high treason against the prince would find in Homburg more merciful judges than any acts or

even words against the bank. If all was right, the bank and not the Landgrave ought to be represented at the Frankfort diet.

The police in Homburg are the most tolerant in the world to those who have money, or at least do not molest the bank by word or deed. Nobody asks for a passport, and the visitor may assume any name or title he may fancy. A fraudulent bankrupt is there safer than in America; the police will shield and protect him as long as there is a lous d'or in his pocket.

Another set of servants of the bank consists of the professors of gaming. Some of these are genuine enthusiasts, shabby and careworn, who believe that there exists some law by which chance is regulated, which, if they once discover it, ensures their winning ever after. Each of them has his system, which he holds to be infallible, but which it requires considerable sums to carry out. There is undeniable truth in most of these systems, for almost all of them are founded on the fact that the colours red and black must change. If I, therefore, lose money on one of them, and double always until it appears, I must win. This is clear, and the bank knows it, of course, perfectly well. But it does not intend to lose, and for this reason the amount of the stakes is limited. That to be put on a single chance—as, for instance, red or black—must not much exceed three hundred pounds. The lowest stake at the roulette is one florin, and at rouge et noir three shillings. The importance of this maximum will be shown by an example. If I stake one florin on red, and double always when losing, my stake will have increased at the eleventh appearance of black to an amount at which I am not permitted to double again. Forced to submit to the laws of the bank, I lose a hundred and thirty florins, even in the case of winning. But if black appears for the twelfth or thirteenth time, as it occurs on the average every ten days, I am a loser of more than seven thousand florins. By following such a system money may be won for several days; but the player once caught cannot recover his losses. Whoever adheres long to such a system will be ruined. This the bank knows, and it patronises, therefore, such professors with the utmost tenderness, taking the cleverest of them into its service. They are sent abroad, and fitted out by the bankers with means to appear as fishermen in good society. Many, however, of these professors are the bitterest enemies of the bank, infatuated believers in their own systems. They have them ready made for small, middling, and large capitals, and are contented with a certain share in the gain made by any who apply to them. The client will, perhaps, win for a week or longer, and rejoice; but the day comes surely when the system fails.

Sometimes large sums are won by punters. This accident, by strengthening the faith of the credulous, only draws more custom and profit to the bank. It is therefore the duty of the servants of the bank to invent stories about persons who have become rich by gambling at the

bank. One case was, however, not invented; it occurred in the year 1859, and in that year the shareholders got only a dividend of thirty per cent, instead of forty. The fortunate man was one of the Bonaparte princes. He came to Homburg when assisting at a scientific meeting in Wiesbaden. He lost, at trente-et-un, about twenty thousand francs: when, leaving the saloon, he felt in his pocket three twenty-franc pieces, and put them à cheval on three different chances on the roulette. In an hour's time he was the winner of thirty thousand francs, and went to breakfast with his adjutant. Before sitting down, the adjutant said to the prince, "I am certain you will lose all again before evening." The prince offered a bet of one thousand francs that he would win eight thousand francs before his friend finished his cutlet. It was accepted. The prince returned to the trente-et-un, and asked one of the croupiers, jokingly, "Well, which will it be, red or black?" "Well, red or—" "Right, you said red," replied the prince, and staked eight thousand francs upon the colour. He won the stake and his bet. In the evening the prince won sixty thousand francs. The next day he was following his run of good luck. The whole neighbourhood was in the greatest agitation, for there never had been such a run of luck before. The prince came off a winner of seven hundred thousand francs, and left when the bank thought it wise to reduce the maximum by half. Out of his winnings he released four Frenchmen from prison and paid their debts; he gave twenty thousand francs to the poor in Homburg, and took with him twenty thousand pounds. General Haynau won also one hundred thousand florins.

Such exceptional cases do good deal of mischief. Sometimes the bank thinks it wise to get rid of a too lucky fellow. He is, before he knows how it was brought about, entangled in a quarrel in the saloon, and on that account denied future admission. Or the quarrel occurs outside, with one of the bullies of the bank, and a duel is the result, or the police orders the troublesome stranger to leave Homburg to prevent a duel.

Among the noticeable visitors to Homburg there has been an old French marquis, with one of his yellow skeleton hands always under the table, and the other too, as often as he could spare it. In this one hand he held a leaden image of some saint, which he was eagerly caressing with the other as long as the ivory ball was running, or the cards dealing, or after a good hit. There was an old Russian princess resident in the place who, playing constantly and at random, left the bank its regular advantage of the zeros in an average loss to it of half her income, that is to say, of five-and-twenty pounds a day. There was a ruined major, who had gambled away four estates, praying piously for luck, and denying to no beggar a kreutzer, lest the want of charity might lead to the Divine confounding of his game. There was again a lady, once lady of honour to the Queen

of France, who, when retiring from her place, took lodgings in a fashionable hotel of Homburg. She kept a carriage and several servants, and was reported rich by the spies of the bank. She was compelled to part with her carriage at the end of the first year; after the second year she must part even with her chambermaid, and remove to a less expensive hotel. However, she did not part with her habit of gambling. After another half-year all her resources were exhausted, and nothing left but a pension of eight pounds, which she received regularly from Paris on the first day of each month.

This poor old lady was perfectly aware of her folly, but she could neither desist from playing nor decide to leave the place. When reduced to her pension, she took a wretched room, containing but a bed, a table, a chest of drawers, four straw-bottomed chairs, and a looking-glass, and agreed with her landlord to pay him in advance fifty francs every month for lodging, board, and a daily half-chopine of spirits. The remaining one hundred and fifty francs were reserved for the gambling-table. On the second day of the month she took her place there, and began punting with florin-pieces. Her pleasure lasted generally four or five days. When the last florin had been taken in by the raker, she was shut up in her room, playing patience with cards and drinking her allowance of spirits. She associated with nobody, and never spoke about the play.

Commercial travellers here gamble away the money of their firms; clerks rob their masters to try their good luck at the bank; officers lose the funds confided to their care; and it is said that the bank was the cause of several deficits in the treasury of the German Confederation in Frankfort. Farmers and peasants, attracted by the hope to gain a few florins without trouble, lose what they have earned by hard work during years.

Suicides are numerous, although the bankers do all they can either to prevent such cases or to conceal them when occurring. Having ascertained by their spies that some poor fellow is desperate, they give him the means to pay his bill, if not too heavy, and to carry away his despair to any other place. When these spies find a poor wretch hanging in the park, the body is removed by their friends in the police, and the incident kept secret as much as possible. If there are witnesses, money is placed in the pockets of the suicide, in order to prove that he did not kill himself in consequence of gambling, although it may indeed look suspicious enough to find a thousand-franc note in the pocket of a man who has just pawned his watch for a few florins. Very often, even the inhabitants of the little town are not able to ascertain the circumstances attending such a case, and the papers do not publish them.

A person in Homburg had not only lost his fortune and place, but also funds trusted to him. He resolved to enter the saloon of the bank with two loaded pistols in his pocket. As soon as he had lost his last florin he intended to kill with one pistol the "chef de partie," and with the

other blow out his own brains. He communicated this intention to a gentleman almost as poor as himself, who advised him to threaten the administration of the gambling bank with his intention. The young man tried the experiment, and it answered; he did not receive the four hundred florins asked for, but at least three hundred and fifty.

A poor young man from Berlin shot himself behind the Kurhaus. A Homburg demon, who was sitting at his wine after the play had finished for the day, heard the report, and said, "Again some one pops off without taking post-horses."

MORE VERY COMMON LAW.

Now as to the law of domestics. To speak again in general terms, a hiring is a hiring for a year, but (as Mr. Blank is probably aware) in the case of domestic servants the law construes a hiring to be determinable by payment of a month's wage, or the giving of a month's warning.

Assuming Mr. Blank's information upon this point, however, we are still at liberty to doubt his ability to define who in the eye of the law is a domestic servant liable to dismissal at a month's notice, and who a servant only to be discharged at the expiration of a year's service. It is quite possible that he may consider his governess, for example, to be a domestic servant liable to the former contingency. The law, however, is of a different opinion. "The position which a governess holds," said Chief Baron Pollock, in giving his judgment upon this question, "the station she occupies in a family, and the manner in which such a person is usually treated in society, certainly place her in a very different position from that which mere menial and domestic servants hold. So far, therefore," continued the learned baron—it may be with a touch of irony—"so far as the question is to be treated as matter of *law*, a governess does not fall within that rule."

Neither, whatever might be Mr. Blank's opinion to the contrary, does a clerk come within the category of a domestic servant. On the other hand, however, as appears from the following reported case, a gardener was adjudged to be a menial servant and treated accordingly. The gardener referred to entered into a gentleman's service as head gardener. On engaging him, his employer inquired "What wages am I to give you?" and received for answer, "I shall not come from Kew without one hundred pounds." This having been agreed to, nothing further was said as to notice, and the florist occupied a house in the grounds, took apprentices, and had five gardeners under him. Not giving satisfaction, however, his master gave him a month's warning, and the courts subsequently confirmed the proceeding, thus treating him as a menial servant.

As a matter of course, this question of dismissal may be materially influenced by the fact of a servant grossly misconducting himself.

Under such circumstances, the master is always at liberty to dismiss the servant, and, moreover, without burdening him with any wage due subsequent to the last day of payment.

It has been decided that if a master has a good ground of dismission against his servant, and afterwards discharges him for an insufficient cause, the servant cannot object that the offence for which he ostensibly loses his situation is not of sufficient gravity to warrant such a proceeding. As Lord Denman has it, "It is not necessary that a master, having a good ground of dismission, should either state it to the servant or act upon it. It is sufficient if it exist, and there be improper conduct in fact."

To come to a more particular definition of the offences which will justify Mr. Blank in discharging his servant, we may mention wilful disobedience of orders, moral misconduct, or habitual neglect, with a convenient et cetera, upon which some little light may be thrown by the following cases:

A clerk asserted a claim to be his master's partner, which piece of presumption his master did not agree to. The claim was made in good faith and respectful language, but it resulted in the ambitious clerk's dismission, and the court confirmed the proceeding.

In giving judgment, Mr. Justice Littledale says, "The plaintiff (the clerk) disclaimed being a servant. If the defendant (the master) had suffered him to go on in the employment after that, the nature of his situation might have been doubtful to those who dealt at the house, and there might have been evidence for a jury that the clerk was really a partner."

Again: the fact of one servant assisting another to leave his master's service, and take ship to America, was held sufficient ground for dismission.

There is another case, also, in which a clerk who had charge of the minute-books of a company, and being requested to enter a minute of his own dismission, supplemented a gratuitous protest in the margin of the book. This was deemed sufficient to put the matter of dismission beyond question.

Occasionally the law is called upon to deal somewhat harshly when treating of this matter, as we may gather from the following leaf culled from the Reports:

A housemaid, hearing that her mother was dangerously ill, asked permission of her master to be absent for one night, in order to visit her. The master refused, but the housemaid, taking that permission which is usually styled French (*Notes and Queries* must tell us why), absented herself for that night and the following day. On her return the master dismissed her, whereupon she brought an action for wrongful dismission. The court decided against her. We rather think the court deemed it a hard case, but considered that they had to deal with legal and not moral obligations. "We are to decide," said Baron Alderson, who was one of the judges in court, "according to the

legal rights of the parties. Where is a decision," he continued, "founded upon mere moral obligation, to stop? What degree of sickness, what measure of relationship is sufficient? It is the safest way, therefore," concluded the learned baron, "to adhere to the legal obligation arising out of the contract between the parties. There may, undoubtedly, be cases justifying a wilful disobedience of such an order, as when the servant apprehends danger to her life, or violence to her person from the master, or where from an infectious disorder raging in the house, she must go out for the preservation of her health; but the general rule is obedience, and wilful disobedience is a sufficient ground of dismissal."

This is rather strong language, but we may mention that another case, not alluded to by the learned baron, in which a servant may absent himself without permission from his master, is whilst looking out for another situation, or going to a public hiring to be hired.

So far dismissal. Let us parenthetically address one word on domestic matters, particularly to Mrs. Blank. Possibly that lady, in common with most householders, possesses a cat. We will suppose that the naturally destructive properties of that animal have reached a very aggravating height indeed; that, not content with a reasonable demolition of "willow pattern," the Sèvres china and the "best service" have not been exempt from the ravages of this domestic Moloch. What is the unwarrantable and unreasonable conclusion to which Mrs. B. is driven by this unpleasant illustration of natural history? First, that the cat and the housemaid are synonymous; and second, that it is her (Mrs. B.'s) legitimate right to inform the latter of her intention to deduct the value of the damaged crockery from her wages. Now, such a proceeding is illegal; in the absence of any express agreement to the contrary, Mrs. Blank must pay the delinquent housemaid her full wages, and recover the value of her demolished Sèvres by an action at law if she can. Lord Ellenborough, in a case where a servant brought an action against her master for wages, and this master wished to place the articles broken by the servant as a "set off," ruled that such a proceeding could not be allowed, and was not in accordance with the law.

As to the matter of medical attendance upon a servant, we may mention that a master is not bound to provide a doctor for a sick domestic. A reported case informs us that a maid-servant, who had met with an accident, called in a medical man without mentioning the master to the master or mistress. The doctor having sent in his account to the master, was refused payment, and (an action at law being the result) it was held that the master was not liable.

Though exempt from payment of a doctor's bill, however, our illustrative Mr. Blank cannot turn away his servant on account of illness. "If a servant, retained for a year," says an old law-book, which has been quoted before the judges without disapprobation, "happens within the term of his service to fall sick

or be hurt, or disabled by the act of God, or in doing his master's business, yet the master must not, therefore, put such servant away, nor abate any part of his wages for such time." In speaking of the "characters" of servants—for attention must next be directed to that branch of our subject—we can state that a master is not legally bound to give a character to his servant at all. In the words of Lord Kenyon, "it may be a duty which the master's feelings prompt him to perform, but there is no law to enforce it." If he do give a character, however, he must take care that it be bona fide, otherwise he may become liable to the new master of the servant, and to the servant himself: to the one, for introducing an unfit person into his house; to the other, for taking away his livelihood.

A case is reported in which a master knowingly gave a false character to a servant. The servant having subsequently robbed his new master, was hanged, and the person who gave the false character was held liable to the master in an action for damages.

Happily for the lawyers, there is a "fine point" to be discovered in so simple a matter as a servant's character. It is this: if a master with malice give a false character to a servant, who is thus prevented from obtaining, or compelled to resign, a situation, the master becomes liable to the servant. If the character is given bona fide and without malice, it then is treated as a "privileged communication," upon which no action can be brought.

Moreover, should a master subsequently discover that the character which he had given of a servant late in his service was not deserved, it would be his duty to inform the new master of his discovery, and this would be a privileged communication.

The Reports furnishing us with a little domestic drama upon this point, we will quote it:

Dramatis personæ	{ Mr. & Mrs. S. (say Smith). Mrs. M. (say Merrylegs). Servants, &c. Gardiner, cook to Mr. & Mrs. S., and afterwards servant to Mrs. Merrylegs.
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ACT I.

Cook being dissatisfied with her situation under Mr. and Mrs. Smith, hires herself to Mrs. Merrylegs. Mrs. M. requests a character. Mr. Smith (rashly, in the absence of Mrs. Smith, who is sick) furnishes a flourishing catalogue of the cook's qualifications, moral and culinary.

ACT II.

Mrs. Smith, convalescent, has occasion to write to Mrs. Merrylegs for the character of another servant, and in the course of her epistle says: "I wish to know whether your servant is economical, and manages well, and obeys her orders, not allowing the other servants to eat out of meal times, or help themselves. I mention this particularly, having discovered that I have been much imposed on in this way a short time ago."

Mrs. Merrylegs smells a rat.

ACT III.

She determines upon a friendly visit to Mrs. Smith, and in that lady's own house to her thus loquitur: "Then you don't consider her (they were discussing the cook) honest?" — Mrs. Smith, loq.: "Honest? Certainly not. Indeed, I would call it very dishonest."

Conversation reported to Gardiner, the cook, who commences an action at law against Mrs. Smith.

ACT IV.

Gardiner v. Smith.

ACT V.

Subsequent letter from Mrs. Smith to Mrs. M., in which the latter reads, "You will remember I imputed no actual dishonesty to Gardiner, for of that I had no actual knowledge."

Held by court that conversation was privileged; consequent defeat of the cook.

A perusal of the police reports will have doubtless shown to most of our readers that to personate a master or mistress, and to furnish a servant with a forged character, are offences which render the person committing them liable to a penalty of twenty pounds, or, failing the payment of that sum, to imprisonment for not less than one or more than three months, with hard labour.

Mr. Blank (to return to that gentleman) is liable for such acts of his servant as are committed at his express or implied command. Mr. Justice Blackstone has it: "What a servant is permitted to do in the usual course of his business is equivalent to a general command. If I pay money to a banker's servant, the banker is liable for it: if I pay it to a clergyman's or physician's servant, whose usual business is not to receive money for his master, and he embezzles it, I must pay it over again."

Mr. Blank is no less responsible for goods bought by his servant of a tradesman, should the course of dealing between Mr. Blank and the tradesman be such as to lead to the supposition that the servant is at liberty to pledge his master's credit. On this point it behoves the tradesman to be cautious. A gentleman, for instance, we find from a reported case, was in the habit of obtaining a certain quantity of porter annually for his family. A bibulous maid-servant in the establishment, thinking the supply small, ordered an extra quantity to be brought secretly, and for which the master refused to pay. Lord Eldon, before whom the question as to who should pay for the increased supply was brought for trial, decided that the master was not liable.

Again: should Mr. Blank give his servant money to purchase goods, and the servant obtain them on credit, it has been held that he is not liable. If he authorises the servant to purchase the goods, however, on credit, and afterwards gives the money to his servant for the purpose of paying for them, but which money the servant embezzles, the case is different.

It appears, too, that to be in a position to claim any exemption whatever, Mr. Blank must pursue some definite course of dealing with his tradesmen. For, as Mr. Justice Blackstone says, "If I send my servant sometimes upon trust and sometimes with ready money, I am answerable for all he takes up: for the tradesman cannot possibly distinguish when he comes by my orders and when he comes upon his own authority."

A lady having ordered her tailor to supply her coachman with two suits of livery in each year, the coachman thought he would prefer having one suit of livery, and one suit of genteel plain clothes. The tailor, in compliance with the coachman's request, made the two suits accordingly; but the matter coming to the ears of the mistress, she refused to pay for the plain suit. The court held that she was quite justified in so doing. "The practice of servants exchanging their liveries for plain clothes," said Lord Abinger, in giving judgment, "is a species of fraud upon the master, and it was the duty of the plaintiff (the tailor) to communicate the circumstance to the defendant (the lady) when the coachman proposed to make the exchange; for if a master thinks it right that his servant should have two suits of livery in the year, it is the duty of the servant to wear such livery."

In a case where a master agreed with his servant for so much wage and a suit of clothes, it was held that the servant had no property in the clothes until he had served a year. Mr. Blank need not, therefore, hesitate to discharge Jeames from any fear of losing the livery, even though he may have recently clothed him in a suit of resplendent plush.

We all know that housemaids and cooks entertain a ridiculous partiality for matrimony. It may be satisfactory to Mrs. Blank to know that, supposing this passion should attack either of her domestics above mentioned, they would still be obliged to continue, until proper notice had been given, in her service. "If a woman who is a servant," says the old law-book to which we have before referred, "marry, yet she must serve out her time, and her husband cannot take her out of her master's service."

Mr. Blank, the law rules, is not, in the absence of custom, liable for the expenses incurred by his servant in going to or returning from the place of hiring.

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